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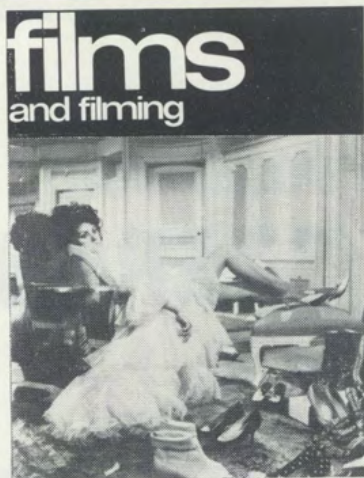
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Contents Winter 1966/67

VOLUME 36 NO 1

Features

- 10 London Festival 66: MICHAEL KUSTOW
- 14 In the Picture
- 24 Les Demoiselles de Rochefort
- 26 States and Cinemas: an enquiry
- 49 Film Clips: ARKADIN
- 52 Correspondence
- 54 Film Guide

Articles

- 2 One or Two Things: JEAN-LUC GODARD
- 7 Au Hasard, Balthazar: GILLES JACOB
- 18 Humphrey and Bogey: LOUISE BROOKS
- 30 Ray and Tagore: CHIDANANDA DAS GUPTA
- 35 Sons of Kafka: CLAIRE CLOUZOT
- 38 All the Better Books: PHILIP FRENCH

Film Reviews

- 42 Fahrenheit 451: PENELOPE HOUSTON
- 43 Seven Women: PETER JOHN DYER
- 44 Masculin Féminin: TOM MILNE
- 45 Der Verlorene: PETER JOHN DYER
- 46 Seconds: DAVID WILSON
- 46 A Thousand Clowns: JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR
- 47 A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum:
PENELOPE HOUSTON
- 47 Hammer and Co.: DAVID WILSON
- 48 The Quiller Memorandum: PENELOPE HOUSTON
- 48 Is Paris Burning?: JOHN GILLET

Book Reviews

- 50 The Celluloid Sacrifice and The Child Stars:
DAVID ROBINSON
- 51 Montage: Satyajit Ray: JOHN GILLET

Cover: Jerzy Skolimowski's 'Barrier'.

Editor: Penelope Houston Associate: Tom Milne
Designer: John Harmer Business Manager: Desmond Thirlwell

SIGHT AND SOUND is an independent critical magazine sponsored and published by the British Film Institute. It is not an organ for the expression of official British Film Institute policy; signed articles represent the views of their authors, and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board.

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One or two things // Jean-Luc Godard





YES, I'M MAKING TWO films at the same time. The first is *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*, starring Marina Vlady; the other, *Made in U.S.A.*, with Anna Karina. They are completely different in style, and have nothing to do with each other, except perhaps that they let me indulge my passion for analysing what is called modern living, for dissecting it like a biologist to see what goes on underneath. *Deux ou trois choses* was inspired by a letter in *Le Nouvel Observateur* from a woman reader replying to an inquiry into part-time prostitution in the new high-rise housing developments. *Made in U.S.A.* is the fusion in my mind of three different things: I wanted to oblige a friend, to tackle the Americanisation of French life, and to do something with the Ben Barka affair.

Why did I agree to make both at the same time? Pride, I think. It's a sort of bet. A performance. As if a musician were to conduct two orchestras at once, each playing a different symphony. It is even more difficult for me than most, as I don't work from a written scenario but improvise as I go along. This sort of improvisation can only work if the ground has been thoroughly thought out in advance, and it needs absolute concentration.

I make my films not only when filming, but as I read, eat, dream, even as I talk. This is why I find making two films at once so exhausting—and so exhilarating. To tell you the truth it wasn't planned that way. I was in the middle of making *Deux ou trois choses* when Georges de Beauregard, who was in financial difficulties after the banning of *La Religieuse*,

asked if I couldn't run something up for him in a hurry. It was the only way to get him out of his difficulties and allow him to hang on, he said. "You're the only person who can do anything at a moment's notice." "I suppose I am," I said.

I hadn't an idea in my head when I accepted. Then I read a *Série Noire* thriller which interested me. As I had just seen *The Big Sleep* again, I thought of having the Humphrey Bogart role played by a woman—Anna Karina, as it happens. I also decided to set the action in France rather than America, and worked a marginal episode from the Ben Barka affair into the main theme. My idea was that Figon was not really dead, but had fled to the country and sent for his mistress to join him. She comes to the address given her, and finds him really dead this time. I have set the action in 1969, two years after the parliamentary elections which will be held in March this year. The character is called Politzer, not Figon. No one knows why he died, and the girl sets out to uncover his past. Among other things, she discovers that he has been the editor of an important Parisian weekly which got very worked up over the Ben Barka affair, and on which she herself was a reporter. Because of her love for him she finds herself playing detective, gets tangled in a web of crooks and cops, and in the end decides to write an article about the affair. The film closes on a discussion with a journalist—Philippe Labro—in a Europe One radio station car.

I started off intending to make a simple film; and for the

GODARD AND SKYSCRAPER: "DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES". ABOVE: ANNA KARINA IN "MADE IN U.S.A."

first time I tried to tell a story. But it isn't my way of doing things. I don't know how to tell stories. I want to cover the whole ground, from all possible angles, saying everything at once. If I had to define myself I would say that I was a painter in letters, as one says man of letters. The result is that although I have respected story continuity for the first time in *Made in U.S.A.*, I couldn't prevent myself from filling in the sociological context. And this context is that everything now is American-influenced. Hence the title.

* * *

The other film is much more ambitious, both on the documentary level, as it is about new development schemes in the Paris region, and on the level of pure research, as it is a film in which I am constantly asking myself what I am trying to do. The pretext, of course, is the life—and sometimes the prostitution—of the new housing schemes. But my real aim is to observe the vast mutation which our civilisation is undergoing at present, and to ask myself how one can best come to grips with this mutation.

I should say right away that I am particularly happy to be living in France today, in our time, because the mutations are gigantic, and for a painter in letters this is enormously exciting. In Europe today, and particularly in France, everything is stirring before our very eyes, and one must have eyes to see: the provinces, youth, urban development, industrialisation. It is an extraordinary period. For me, describing modern living is not simply a matter of describing new gadgets and industrial developments as some newspapers do, but of observing these mutations. So my film opens with a commentary.

On August 17, Paul Delouvrier is appointed administrator-in-chief of the new Parisian region. As the commentary is read, we see shots of building sites, road works, housing blocks, people trying to go about the business of living.

"DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES QUE JE SAIS D'ELLE".



Suddenly my own voice is heard, asking myself if I have used the right words in speaking about all this. For instance, I film a house and I ask myself: "Am I right to film this house and not another, at this moment and not another?" In short, the spectator is made to share in the arbitrary nature of my particular choice, and in the quest for a general rule to justify the particular.

Why am I making this film, why am I making it this way? Is the character played by Marina Vlady representative of women on housing estates? I keep asking myself these questions. I watch myself filming, and you hear me thinking aloud. *Deux ou trois choses*, in fact, is not a film but an essay at film, presented as such and really forming part of my own personal research. A document rather than a story. Stretching a point or two, it's a film which ought to have been commissioned by M. Paul Delouvrier.

Of course, it is my secret ambition to be put in charge of French newsreels. Each of my films constitutes a report on the state of the nation: they are news reportages, treated in a quirkish way perhaps, but rooted in actuality. *Le Petit Soldat* ought to have been subsidised by the Ministry of Information, *Vivre sa Vie* by the Ministry of Health, *Pierrot le Fou* by the Minister for Culture (for the quotations), and *Masculin Féminin* by our Minister for Youth.

I mention subsidy because, shocking as it may seem and taking all in all, when faced by a choice between dictatorship by money and by political censorship, I prefer the former. Advertising is another of my obsessions. In the modern world, the advertising element reigns supreme, determining everything, paralysing everything. Advertising is allowed, or rather takes, liberties forbidden to everyone else; and in this way it is so representative of our society that it is a richer treasure trove of documentation than any archive. I buy certain papers solely to be able to read the advertisements. All of it interests me: how the slogans change, the graphics, the ways of seducing the consumer public. The importance of advertising is enormous, and so little recognised that I was attacked for being too outspoken about sex when all I did was film the posters which can be seen on any wall. I just brought them all together, and the result was thought 'daring'.

To return to *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*. Although it was sparked off by a newspaper anecdote, what excited me most was that this anecdote linked up with one of my pet theories, that in order to live in society in Paris today, on no matter what social level, one is forced to prostitute oneself in one way or another—or to put it another way, to live under conditions resembling those of prostitution. A worker in a factory prostitutes himself in a way three-quarters of the time, being paid for doing a job he has no desire to do. The same is true of a banker, a post office employee, a film director. In modern industrial society, prostitution is the norm: and my film endeavours to present one or two lessons on industrial society. (I quote frequently from Raymond Aron's book, *Eighteen Lessons on Industrial Society*.) No doubt you will say that I take myself very seriously. I do. I think a film director has such an enormous part to play that he can't afford not to.

When a director makes a film, he is not only the head of a great enterprise but the strategist of a great general staff, and the possibilities are fantastic. He has to deal with banks, unions, the government, he is in contact with people from all layers of society. He negotiates, controls, influences, borrows, invests. In addition his work has public repercussions, and he is not permitted to make mistakes. As far as art is concerned, he is on his own; but in its execution, he is a veritable head of state.

I am now on my thirteenth film, and yet I feel I have hardly begun really to look at the world. Curiously enough, once again I feel this because I live in France. I have travelled a

TABLE POUR 1000



"MADE IN U.S.A.": LASZLO SZABO, ANNA KARINA.

good deal, and was recently planning to leave France again to make films abroad. In Cuba, for instance, about the teaching of illiterates. Or in North Vietnam, to see new ideals at war and to bear witness. Now I feel that I can do the same job by talking about Cuba and Vietnam in my films. Above all I feel that a country can rarely have offered such a range of exciting subjects as France today. The choice is bewildering. I want to cover everything—sport, politics, even groceries—look at Edouard Leclerc,* a fantastic man whom I'd love to do a film about or with. You can put anything and everything into a film, you *must* put in everything.

* * *

When I am asked why there are references to Vietnam in my films, or to Jacques Anquetil, or to some lady who's deceiving her husband, I refer the questioner to his daily paper. It's all there. In any old order. This is why I'm so attracted by television, one of the most interesting expressions of modern living. A televised newspaper, carefully composed and documented—that would be something extraordinary. What might be even more extraordinary would be to get the various national editors to bring out their own televised newspapers. One could have a couple of hours daily of *France-Soir*, three hours of *Nouvel Observateur* every Thursday, and so on. It would be marvellous. But television in France is the voice of Power, just as it is the voice of the dollar in the United States. So, one has to make do with the cinema, attempting the impossible in order to try to do what the newsreels and programmes don't.

There are other taboos in France, and one of them—no

*A dynamic young revolutionary of grocery marketing—the Marks and Spencer of France.

matter what they think abroad—is sex. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make a frank film about sexual problems. Let's be honest: in order to make a frank film, one must oneself be affranchised, and this, I find in my own case, takes some effort. I still retain ingrained traces of my Protestant upbringing, and I have struggled to get rid of them. But each time I have tried to do something on film it shocks, and it is hard to understand why.

As a matter of fact, no one has ever made a real film about sex, except perhaps Buñuel. The difficult thing is to speak of sex as the psychologists do, coldly and clinically. In *Deux ou trois choses* (where, by the way, the 'elle' is not Marina Vlady but Paris), two people who don't know each other start talking in a café. One of them says: "It's a fine day." The other replies: "We could talk about something more interesting." "But it is interesting," the first goes on. "I love fine weather and the rain, and I talk about it because it interests me."

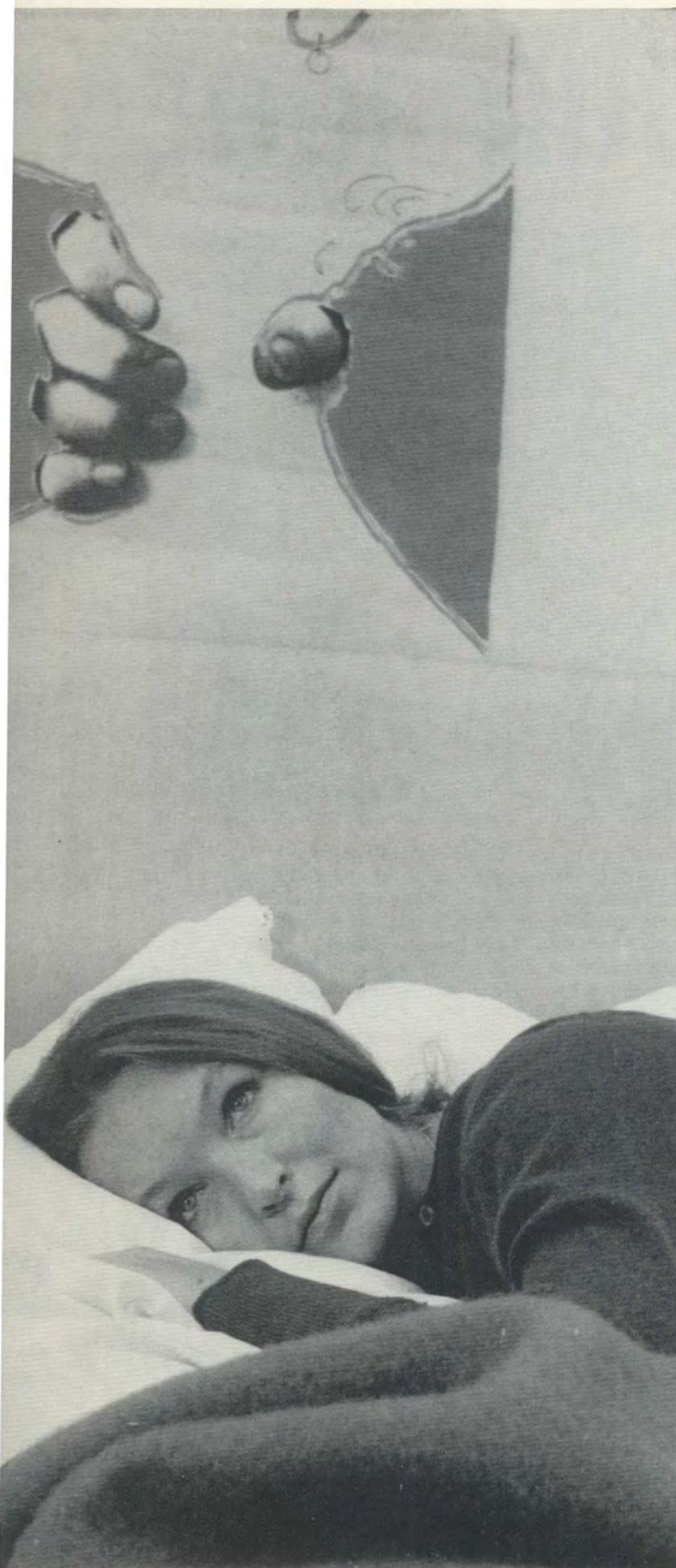
The other then says, "It doesn't interest me. Let's talk about something else, about sex for instance, because I think it's impossible to talk about it properly in the cinema. Actually nothing is talked about properly in the cinema. I don't know why. But sex is even less properly talked about than anything else."

—"But they're always talking about sex," the first replies.

—"Yes, but talking stupidly. Yet it's no different from the human body, legs, hair, music. So why is it considered to be so inordinately important, or conversely, not important enough? Listen, for instance, I'll ask you to repeat a sentence, and I'm sure you won't dare."

—"What sentence?"

—"First, swear to repeat it."



"DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES": MARINA VLADY.

He refuses, then decides to swear, and the other says, "The sentence is very simple. It's: My sex is between my legs."

Then the first says, "I won't say that, I think it's stupid," etc.

Of course it's stupid, but it illustrates how sex is seen as something bizarre. Mark you, I myself will not tolerate indecency. Two people kissing, for instance. I have shown this once, with Belmondo and Seberg in *A Bout de Souffle*, but never since. The characters in my films embrace and caress each other, but never kiss. The kiss is something intimate and private, purely personal and therefore unshowable. On a huge screen it is revolting to watch. When people kiss in the street I never look at them. I respect their intimacy. But sex is a different matter. One could study it and film it, just as love is studied and filmed. Not that anyone has succeeded in discovering the mystery of love—and it is a mystery which fascinates me. How can something which is a feeling and therefore intangible, provoke such physical joy and pain? What I would like to be able to do one day is show—just show, not comment on—the moment when a feeling enters the body and becomes physiologically alive. Proust took thirty years and eight volumes on a feeling; and one still wants to know how and why it happens.

My mixed feeling of remoteness and fascination towards love also applies to actors. How can anyone be an actor? I can never understand. They are both monsters and children, and my relations with them are unhappy. I don't speak to them, and it's difficult because they are like sick children, constantly in need of reassurance. They suffer from an inability to express themselves, which is why they have become actors, of course. They are children trying to speak at birth, and because they can't, they borrow expression from others.

The plight of the actor moves me deeply because he is composed of infirmities. I don't share Camus' belief that the actor is a Don Juan, living several destinies at once. Actors have no destiny, and they know it. Far from living many roles, they are constantly made aware of their mutilation. Between the creator and the actor there is the same distance as between is and has. The actor *is* not. This said, though, I part company with Bresson when he says there can be no such thing as a good professional actor. I very much admire Bresson, who is one of our greatest directors, but I cannot help feeling that his attitude to actors smacks almost of racism. The director's ideal must certainly be to rediscover a freshness and spontaneity beyond theatricality; but that's his business.

* * *

Put another way, it seems to me that we have to rediscover everything about everything. There is only one solution, and that is to turn one's back on the American cinema. I deplore the fact that the Soviet dream now is to imitate Hollywood, just when Hollywood has nothing more to say. This, if you like, is my own personal way of deploring Soviet-American collusion. Up till now we have lived in a closed world. Cinema fed on cinema, imitating itself. I now see that in my first films I did things because I had already seen them in the cinema. If I showed a police inspector drawing a revolver from his pocket, it wasn't because the logic of the situation I wanted to describe demanded it, but because I had seen police inspectors in other films drawing revolvers at this precise moment and in this precise way. The same thing has happened in painting. There have been periods of organisation and imitation, and periods of rupture. We are now in a period of rupture. We must turn to life again. We must move into modern life with a virgin eye.

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AU HASARD, BALTHAZAR



HANDS OF MARIE AND JACQUES: "... COMME TOUT EST RESTE PAREIL."

Gilles Jacob

MOMENTARILY TAKING ON THE character of his own dream project, Lancelot of the Lake, Bresson has picked up the gauntlet: with *Au Hasard, Balthazar* it is almost as though he were replying in advance to the charges his critics always make. This time, something does happen on the screen: car crashes, assault, battery, torture, rape, flogging, arrest, circus turns, vandalism, theft, death, smuggling, shooting, not to mention references to a murder—only a suspected murder, it is true. At all events, an animal suffers: not, this time, an ethereal spirit but a living creature, alive as men are alive. More flesh and blood, cried his critics: Bresson has given them both, and naked flesh at that. Admittedly this blood is soon congealed, and the nude is a Botticelli with the nacreous flesh of a Filippo Lippi madonna; but Bresson's irony seeps through, and seems to draw strength from the veil of reticence.

But the novelty of *Balthazar* lies less in the wealth of happenings than in the eye, that veiled but disenchanted eye, which Bresson turns on the modern world. The price of progress in this

mechanical age is *la civilisation du week-end*: a world where young delinquents indulge their twin passions for speed and the transistor; a parade of violence and flagrant sexuality which sweeps even the countryside like an irresistible tide; a society subject to every temptation from eroticism (discreet, but new to Bresson's work) to easy money, and whose *objets-clés* are stick, whip, scooter, radio, jukebox, fire-cracker, revolver, alcohol, cash. Here Bresson clips the wings from critical comments like "irrelevant to the times," "more and more withdrawn from the world." For if the dancers (us?) in the café sequence seem indifferent to the fiendish destruction which rages round them, the teenage thirst for liberty echoes that of the underdeveloped countries, their need to inflict torture proves that the Algerian tragedy still exists, and their fire-crackers soar into the same sky as space rockets. The moon scudding by so close past the clouds is not just a touch of decorative vanity: it is a reminder that although one must take scientific progress into account, human feelings have not changed. Bresson, at the age of fifty-eight, has dropped his mask. No question here

that he is against the need to cause suffering, against brute sensuality, against avarice for money, against avarice of the heart, against self-destructive pride, against the increasing stupidity of man.

* * *

The world changes, but not Bresson. *Au Hasard, Balthazar* is his greatest and most Bressonian film, but not merely because it echoes the arrogance of *Les Anges du Péché*, the waterfall of *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*, the letter-reading of *Le Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*, the gear-lever of *Un Condamné à Mort*, the hands of *Pickpocket*, the naked feet of *Jeanne d'Arc*. It is great because in the harmonies and dissonances between the characters (Marie in particular) and the donkey, Balthazar, and between successive images, between images and soundtrack, there is a dynamic exchange reaching to the limits of possibility whereby each is enriched, transformed by the contact. Motion and stasis, repetition and fulfillment, transition, resonance of sequence against sequence, reality against fantasy, flesh against spirit, sight against sound:

Bresson's style is in perfect working order, a well-oiled machine set to reveal the secret, inner movement he cherishes.

Assuming his audience to be adult, and refusing to do their work for them, Bresson does not explain his film or stress its few scattered keys. The principal themes to be orchestrated throughout the film are introduced right from the beginning. We see a foal suckled by its mother, a child's caressing hands,¹ a strange baptism in the salt of wisdom, children playing in the straw, a bench, a swing, the death of a little girl, a carriage laden with luggage; a murmured phrase, "Till next year!" which an irony of fate renders meaningless as soon as it is uttered (the father has no intention of coming back). Then a swift transition: blows raining on the donkey, the donkey being shod. After the petting, the years of work and hardship, the sand to be carted, the fields to be ploughed. The sequence ends on an image of the donkey, injustice and hypocrisy already lashing him like blows from a whip.

Already Bresson has introduced the main themes from his concerto for donkey and orchestra. The carriage represents departure and escape (there are numerous attempts, successful, unsuccessful, or simply projected); the bench and the swing, respectively, represent stability (marriage, family, wealth—the Jacques theme) and movement, excitement, risk (carnal love, truancy, perdition—the theme of Gérard, Arnold, the old miser). The whole film hangs hesitating in a balance between two poles: between good and evil, richness and poverty, honesty and dishonesty, justice and injustice, love and hatred, novelty and tradition, sacred and profane love, the folly of the modern world and the wisdom of a return to the simple life, to the soft, shadowy hillside landscapes which Bresson has portrayed with the nuanced delicacy of a Corot.

GERARD: FRANCOIS LAFARGE.



The swing of the pendulum is counterbalanced by the solidity of the wall behind the credit titles; by the bench which appears four times, marking the return of Jacques and his coefficient of security (a Jacques whose unfulfilled love is a parenthesis enclosed between two incantatory lines, "O Marie, comme tout est resté pareil" and "O Jacques, combien de fois j'ai rêvé de toi");² by the bridge spanning two possibilities which is crossed by Balthazar, and the mountain milestone to which Arnold bids a last goodbye, as if the frontier between the two sides of human nature, evoked by the cries of "Halte! Douane!", also marked the gap between two systems of education, between two generations. The older generation is mainly concerned with what people will say³—"Did anyone see you?" the old miser asks Marie. The younger, having nothing but contempt for their elders, either grow mulish when ruled with a rod of iron (Marie) or corrupt when cajoled and rewarded even in wrongdoing (Gérard).

* * *

Hence a final choice—the most obvious of all perhaps—between freedom and submission. A recurring leitmotif in Bresson's work is the breaking of a servitude, or the construction of a liberation. Just as Orsini's failure enabled Fontaine to escape in *Un Condamné à Mort*, so Marie, to break the parallel between her life and that of Balthazar, determines to free herself once and for all from her father's domination and the forces which dispute her soul. Earlier, in *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*, Chantal explained to the priest that she would run away, disgrace herself, and write to tell her father. Marie does not have time: the father she judges so harshly⁴ has died already, his honour and pride in ruins, an archetypal Bressonian figure. However, in this modern version of "Heaven helps him who helps himself," Marie's destiny asserts itself by way of—*au hasard de*—Balthazar's suffering and Gérard's brutal revelation of the domination of sexual pleasure. After the dialogue with her mother, the scene with the old miser, and the final ordeal which sees her beaten up, stripped naked and locked in by the gang of *blousons noirs*, this destiny is accomplished. The film traces the gradual process by which she is—both literally and figuratively—physically and morally stripped; and no process could correspond more exactly to the whole notion we have of Bresson's aesthetic.

In the end, Marie's obsession with domination leaves her equally possessed by a desire to be free. Fleeing one servitude, she chooses another, even more insidious. Can we really be free? Bresson doubts it. When Balthazar escapes it is to head straight for another prison, with Marie, or with the circus, where the silent confrontation of the animals—the vision, almost, of a donkey versed in the Fables of La Fontaine—makes one

wonder: on which side of the bars are the prisoners, and are bars necessary to constitute a prison? Where does the real world end and fantasy begin, where the role of man and where the role of God? Man thinks he governs his own destiny, whereas he can, at best, be a feather in the scale while "the wind bloweth where it listeth." The steel gauntlet of necessity grips us by the hand, dragging us along paths to freedom which turn out to lead to imprisonment. Neither Bresson nor Balthazar himself can prevent him from entering the circus, from demonstrating in his fabulous act that he possesses the mathematical ability denied to the schoolmaster (who is accused by the envious of tending his business too well). Thanks to a magic power ironically⁵ conferred on a reputedly ignorant ass, it is Balthazar who spins the theme of figures and money.

* * *

Money, accounts to be rendered, justice: all possible alienations of liberty. It is just after he miraculously inherits a fortune that poor Arnold loses his life; it is while returning the banknotes to the miser that Marie has her sudden revelation, "I have always wanted to get away." Unconsciously at first, she wants to be elsewhere, and she is never shown at home—except perhaps at the end, crouching naked in the corner of an empty room. Like Hélène in *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*, like Fontaine and Jost in *Un Condamné à Mort*, she disappears into the night, locked in her own destiny and no longer participating in a contest from which she has disqualified herself. No doubt she will pass from hand to hand like Balthazar, a black knave whose seven masters each represents a deadly sin. But what does it matter? Marie, grown hard and unfeeling, does not arouse sympathy.⁶

Balthazar, on the other hand, does. Submitting to human law, and at times inspired almost by humanity, he

MARIE: ANNE WIAZEMSKY.



is at once witness, judge, conscience, 'hasard'. From scenes like the one where he wanders into the stable of his childhood to make Marie a gift of his liberty;⁷ where Marie sees him from the car and runs to pet him; where Balthazar, drawing water from a well, falls wearily to his knees, seeming to pray for the rain which falls in the very next shot; from scenes like these it is clear that there is some sort of supernatural transmission between them—a transmission of liberty. The crossing of their destinies seems inevitable, and is made even more complex by the intervention of the other characters. Narrating, quite simply, the life story of a donkey, Bresson uses it as a direct guiding thread through the continuous cycle of masters, Marie-Gérard-Arnold-The Miser. And it is a cycle which would begin again, Marie-Gérard... were it not for Arnold, whose life runs momentarily parallel to Balthazar's, and whose death breaks the cycle, prefiguring his.

Whether metamorphoses or transfigurations, we witness mystical exchanges between Balthazar and Marie, between Balthazar and the others, following the doctrine of transference of sin whereby the innocent atone for the guilty. Seen as a devil by Arnold—a drunk surely viewing the world upside-down?—Balthazar is a modern martyr, a pure example of sacrifice on his road to sainthood. It is as if, laden with silk, perfumes and gold, and dying amid the flock of sheep on the hillside in the wonderful final sequence, Balthazar were seeking divine forgiveness for the entire human race, tendering his own life in exchange.

* * *

From this point of view, certain things become clearer. For instance, the strange, beautiful scene where the two boys spy on Marie and Balthazar. "She's probably in love with him," one of them says, as Marie garlands him with flowers and places an unchaste kiss on his nose. In this sibylline ceremony, its gestures invested with a mysterious, hieratic quality, one senses an almost mythological rite. Similarly with the murder (fact, fiction, fantasy?) so casually evoked, and the curious use of dialogue where words never repeat the images and leave areas unspoken: both are invitations to poetry and mystery.

But if Bresson has a passion for mystery, there is also the mystery of the passion. Allusions and references to the Passion of Christ abound in this hagiography: salt, straw, stable, baptism, the name of one of the Three Kings; the intimation that we are witnessing Balthazar's Agony; the affinity between Arnold and Judas (his vagrancy, his drunken remorse, his miraculous inheritance—the thirty pieces of silver—the mocking kiss exchanged with the boys, his strange death). Gérard and his friends, counterparts of the two thieves of Ecclesiastes, troubling the very air by



BALTHAZAR'S DEATH, AMONG SHEEP ON THE HILLSIDE.

their presence like the cat in *Les Anges du Péché*, introduce a satanic element—most clearly in the scene where the cars skid on the oil they have spread on the road. A touch of the supernatural intervenes here, and it is worth noting that as well as the smell of sulphur, there hangs about them the scent of latent homosexuality already hinted at in *Pickpocket*.

Others more qualified than I will doubtless sort out the web of correspondences between Bresson's parable and the Old and New Testaments. There can be no doubt that, whether consciously or unconsciously drawn, such correspondences exist, but they are deliberately remote, random and disordered. Bresson himself rejects these parallels, fearing perhaps to see his film reduced and explained away. I mention them only as indications of the many-stranded complexity of a film which reveals new facets, new depths, at each subsequent viewing.

* * *

There remains Bresson's quarrying of time, different from any other, cutting fragments out of space and time to be reassembled in another space and time: a constant improvisation which forces a sort of virginity of inspiration, the mood of the film a colloquial lyricism and grave tranquillity, counterpointing Schubert's Sonata in A Major with sounds like the hiss of a brandished stick and the gratingly vulgar speech ("C'est chouette, un âne," "Crève, sale vache," "je le fiche en l'air"). There remains, too, a construction so elliptically concise, effect almost always preceding cause, that one can no longer be sure our old keys will open these doors.

Shortly after the seduction sequence, asked by Marie's father "What are you doing here?" Gérard replies, "Looking

for something that belongs to me. I'm not a thief." This simple sentence, redolent not only of malice (the rumours circulating about the father's honesty), but of implication (he leads Balthazar away, but it is Marie, his new conquest, he really wants), and of irony (the next shot discovers Gérard's theft in the bakery), works on so many levels that the man who built it surely earns the name of architect. In a cinema still struggling to find expression, Bresson's work soars like the spire of a cathedral. Yielding nothing, accepting no compromise, he makes his own grace—and his own isolation. After *Balthazar*, we know that only Bresson can make us sense the ineffable, see the invisible, touch the intangible.

NOTES

1. In the earlier films, *Pickpocket* in particular, hands are a symbol of action; here they represent fleshly love, the effort to communicate.
2. Recalling the line from *Pickpocket*: "O Jeanne, pour arriver jusqu'à toi, quel drôle de chemin il m'a fallu prendre."
3. The original title of *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* was *Opinion Publique*.
4. "He loves his misfortune more than us. He cultivates it. He needs it."
5. An irony which appears again in the "action painting" conversation.
6. Basically, she is one of a kind with her father, eaten away by pride. When she begs Gérard, "Help me! Take me away," and his only reply is to turn away to dance with someone else, she does the same; and the miser remarks "Your father will break you."
7. Together with its inherent taint of sin, indicated in the scene where the *blousons noirs* follow the donkey-cart, hanging on to its shafts.

London Festival Chart

Festival round-up by a group of SIGHT AND SOUND writers. Some films have already been written about in our various Festival reports; others will be reviewed when they open in London.

★★★★ TO ★ INDICATE CRITICS' RATINGS ● INDICATES ANTIPATHY	ELLIOTT STEIN	PHILIP STRICK	TOM MILNE	JAMES PRICE	DAVID ROBINSON	JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR	DAVID WILSON
Barrier (Jerzy Skolimowski)	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★			★★★★
The Battle of Algiers (Pontecorvo)	★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★		★★★★
Bwana Toshi (Susumu Hani)		★	★	★★	★★★		★★
La Caza (Carlos Saura)	●	★★★	★★★	★★★	★		★★★
The Eavesdropper (Torre Nilsson)	●	★		●	★★	★★	★★★
Echoes of Silence (Peter Goldman)	★	●	●	●		●	●
Every Young Man (Pavel Juracek)	★★★	★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★
The Face of Another (Teshigahara)		★★	★★★	★★★	★★		★★
The Gift (Ron Kelly)		★	★★	★		★	★★
Intimate Lighting (Ivan Passer)	★★★★	★	★★	★★★		★★	★★★
Lenin in Poland (Yutkevich)			★★	★	★★★	★★★	★★
La Longue Marche (Astruc)		★★★	★★★	★		●	
Made in U.S.A. (Jean-Luc Godard)		★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short (André Delvaux)	●	★★	★★★★	★★	★	★★	★★
Mourir à Madrid (Frédéric Rossif)	●	★	★	★★			
Le Père Noël a les Yeux Bleus (Jean Eustache)	★	★★	★★	★	★	★★	★
La Prise de Pouvoir par Louis XIV (Roberto Rossellini)	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★		★★★★	★★★
The Private Right (Michael Papas)	★★	★★	★★★	●	★	★★	★★★
Seven Women (John Ford)	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		★★★★	★★★★	●
Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors (Sergei Paradzhanov)	★★★★	★★	●		●	★★	
Si J'avais Quatre Dromadaires (Chris Marker)		★★★★	★★★	★★		★★★	★★
Trouble-Makers (Norman Fruchter, Robert Machover)			★★	★			★★
Uccellacci e Uccellini (Pasolini)		★★	●	★★	★	★★★	★★★★
Un Uomo a Metà (Vittorio De Seta)		●	★★	●	●	★	●
La Vieille Dame Indigne (René Allio)	★★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★	★★
Winter Kept Us Warm (David Secter)	●	●	★★	★	★★★	★★	★★
Yesterday Girl (Alexander Kluge)	★★★★	★★★	★★	★★	★★★	★★	★★★

FESTIVALS 66

LONDON

Michael Kustow

"For the historian," says Professor Butterfield, "the only absolute is change." The absolute in history . . . is something still incomplete and in the process of becoming—something in the future towards which we move, which begins to take shape only as we move towards it, and in the light of which, as we move forward, we gradually shape our interpretations of the past."

E. H. CARR, *What is History?* 1961

When no wind blows, a weathervane has character.
STANISLAW LEC, Polish epigrammatist, 1962

WELL, THE WIND IS BLOWING, the wind of history, and we in Britain (having produced our fair share of weathervanes this century—Munich, Suez) sit in the wintry blasts from Rhodesia, from Vietnam, take a good hard look at our character and aren't very happy at what we see: a paralysed cockerel gyrating anxiously between the puffs of President Johnson and the gusts of de Gaulle. Our artists begin to articulate our hidden concern with history, our fear that we've lived on the sidelines too long. And the subterranean currents come to the surface. *It Happened Here* still touches the anxious pulse. Peter Watkins tries to break through the blandness barrier on television, and fails; but that urgency reaches cinema

audiences. Saturday night TV satire makes public affairs accessible in a new and irreverent way; but it declines to a ritual coconut shy, where politicians are reassuring fools. Meanwhile the theatre, with plays about Oppenheimer, the Kennedy assassination and Vietnam, moves into the area where what Brecht called "the knotting-together" of public events can be shown, and the individual's pitch of commitment can be measured. But our pundits castrate it with a label, "theatre of fact," and we're safe again.

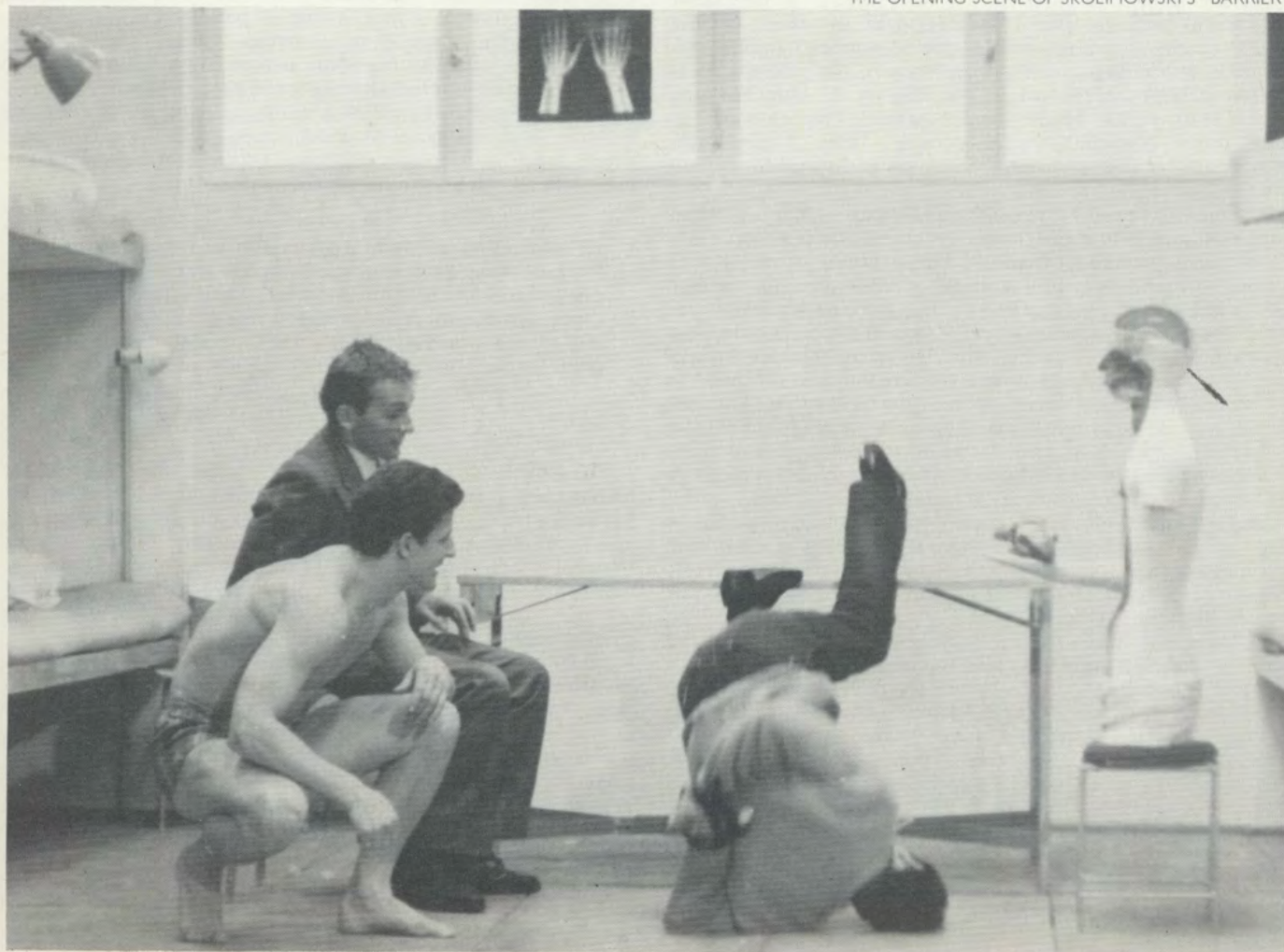
Into this arena of unease comes the 1966 London Film Festival, where a number of films from different countries and alien contexts may add to our unease, increase our understanding, of the taste and pressure of this history wind. I shall take four films—not the only four in the Festival to illuminate this area of concern—and try to look at the different postures the cinema can take to clarify for its maker, elucidate for its audience and question for its society the issues raised by:

- a thirty-year-old civil war;
- the making of a seventeenth-century French king;
- the violent feed-back of a "national liberation war" against the British;
- coming to terms with daily life in a history-trampled East European country.

* * *

Frédéric Rossif's *Mourir à Madrid* is a compilation of the Spanish Civil War. Combining newsreels of the time with

THE OPENING SCENE OF SKOLIMOWSKI'S "BARRIER".





"LA PRISE DE POUVOIR PAR LOUIS XIV".

sequences of today's Spanish fields and squares, with their unchangeable placidity, the film has a sobriety and restraint which add up to tragedy. Its structure is unemphatic; it contents itself with untangling some of the skeins of a labyrinth, allowing certain patterns of war and politics to emerge.

Like all compilations, like all stills by great war photographers, what seizes our attention is the realisation that these things indubitably happened, that we may catch the revelatory instant of grief or joy or surprise. A peepshow fascination perhaps. But I was brought up short by the incredibly amateur arms-drill of the Republican militia, 12-year-olds and peasants with horseshoes in their belts about-turning in hopeless confusion. The flag on the ship bringing Soviet arms which reads CARLOS MARX. The glee of the tired, dusty Nationalist soldiers when they finally push through to the sea, dash into the waves in full uniform, and give the Heil salute to Neptune.

But one can become a voyeur, building up such a list. What stops one here is first the tragic fervour of the butchery: any merely aesthetic reaction would be an abuse. And yet one does continue to note how a scene of bitter guerilla warfare takes place on a bright day in an olive grove under snow, and one thinks of Breughel's *Icarus*, Godard's *Carabiniers*, and reproaches oneself. But the film has a further dimension which pushes us firmly up against stern realities. A sense of the archetypes of political situations informs its shaping. Thus we see the way in which particular battles become emblems: the Nationalist relief of Alcazar draws on the sense of preserving a citadel against barbaric hordes. The Republican victory at the Ebro is like a defiant Spartan last-ditch stand.

And perhaps the overriding and most troubling analogy is with Vietnam today: the terrible feeling that a civil war becomes a pretext for greater powers to try out new techniques. Hitler sent in the crack Condor Legion, discovered the rules of blanket bombing of civilian centres "to break their will." The Americans employ napalm and phosphorus. That's the analogy that rises unbidden and the authors endorse it, with characteristic delicacy, at the end of the film. The refugees are pouring out of Spain, "300,000 Catalonians, many of them holding a fistful of earth." Cut to massed crowds as Hitler inspects the Condor Legion, fresh from its Spanish triumphs. "Three months later," says the commentary, "they will be in Warsaw, a year later in Paris." And you realise that all the Spanish heroism, and determination and tears, have been elements in a dress-rehearsal, no more. It makes you wonder what show will follow the Vietnam epic.

Never make toothless tyrants laugh.

STANISLAW LEC

King Louis in Rossellini's *La Prise de Pouvoir par Louis XIV* is not much given to laughing, but is a great joker, a very serious joker. We first meet him at the *levée*, when the procession of noblemen enter his bedchamber, draw back the curtains of the fourposter to reveal this plump solemn-faced young man in bed with his queen-to-be. She makes a sign indicating that Louis has this night performed his marital duty, upon which, led by Louis into a solemn mumble which makes you suspect he doesn't know all the words, the entire company offer up a benediction. The film's theme is set: the importance of appearance and display in assuming and maintaining power. "Je veux gouverner," announces Louis in the interregnum of conspiracy left by the death of Mazarin.

The film really takes off when Louis starts to carve out his individual path to power. He arrests Fouquet in the most blatant manner possible, doing it in Nantes, capital of Fouquet's province. Louis creates a new style of men's dress, sumptuous with lace and ribbons, so that the noblemen will pant to keep up with court styles, and become financially dependent. Then he builds Versailles, walks with his chapbook in the gardens, duly followed by a bowing and scraping cavalcade, uncomfortable in their outrageous costumes. The climax is a gargantuan meal which Rossellini films in slow tempo and intricate detail, following the course of dish after dish through the hands of the humiliated nobles, reduced to passing napkins, pouring wine, or unlocking tureens. We leave Louis firmly established, alone in a room where he removes all the frippery and at his ease contemplates a sentence in his book: "neither the sun nor death can be looked at steadily."

Rossellini has filmed this in colour, very simply, in long takes and using a zoom instead of cutting. The occasional makeshift air of being around at a game of charades works well, for on a magnificent scale that is precisely how Louis established himself. But there is nothing magnificent about Rossellini's style: his film is full of people waiting in ante-chambers, of arrivals, exits, courtiers being drawn aside to mutter at the end of a big room before some decisive action. What he makes you feel sharply is the time-process of history, the ticking seconds in which a man's ascendancy rests in the balance. It is this sense of watchfulness, walking a tightrope where every step counts, that makes the film belong to the twentieth as much as to the seventeenth century.

At this point, colonial aggression grows inwards in the colonised as Terror... They are trapped between our guns aimed at them and these horrifying impulses, these desires for murder which rise from their hearts, often unrecognised: for it's not *their* violence, it's our own, turned inside out, which swells and tears them.

JEAN PAUL SARTRE, preface to *Les Damnés de la Terre*, 1961

The key to Michael Papas' *The Private Right* lies in its ruthless uncovering of this inadmissible aggression which, as Sartre describes, we sow in the minds of our colonial enemies, and then reap as a virus in torture, vendettas, and the settling of accounts. Sitting back in the metropolitan mother-country, we cannot accept this violent feedback. We are scandalised, we ask questions in the House of Commons, protest when the cinema acknowledges it.

The film opens with a sustained battle between guerillas and British troops in a Cyprus landscape. It's a typical mopping-up operation. It's also a nightmare, a primal scene of pursuit and escape which terrorises our dreams. From the very start, Papas hits this ambiguous level, between documentary and nightmare. In the midst of a flurry of gunfire and lobbed grenades (what's so convincing about this sequence is the *excessiveness* of noise and confusion) there is a sudden halt, a long-held shot on the face of the guerilla leader trying to take in what is happening, trying to make some sense of these

sprawling corpses he's created. Then we're off again: two rifle-butts slam into his shoulders and the breathless guerilla leader is captured.

Into a prison cell, where he's tortured by another Cypriot, while British soldiers and warders stand stunned, mute witnesses to the ferocity of this fraternal violence they have helped to create. It is water torture we are shown, the kind that brings you to the brink of suffocation. Papas shoots this almost ceremonially, with geometric tracking shots and crudely rhythmical cuts. The effect, like the moments of pause in the battle sequence, is to make you take the thing in more deeply, squirm at the decency of the British officer who has the luxury of telling the Greek torturer he's really going too far.

The victim is left to recover. Through the buzz of his head comes a babble of bells, speeches, cheering crowds, the sounds of independence. The film jumps forward, and the main action—the revenge of victim against torturer—begins. And now it's in England. This settling of accounts will take place in our streets, and we will watch, powerless and ashamed. The victim comes to Victoria Station, seeking his man. Installed in a darkened house where the traffic roars past incessantly (soundtrack and music consistently give a spiky nervousness to the action), he begins his quest through Cypriot London. Again a well-judged sense of excess: the search is interminable, there seems no chance of finding his man in this Kafkaesque labyrinth on our own street corners.

He goes to a party, a collage of English chatter, English snogging, English bookshelves and lampshades, a bravura flurry of English unreality as this still, dark man sits waiting for his enemy. Instead he meets a friend, a quiet sad-faced blonde he takes to bed. Their love-making is a lyrical pause, a tender analogy to the pause in the fighting. But next morning the chase continues, and he gets a tip-off, goes to a house, screws on his silencer, walks in past the silently screaming wife, takes aim at the back of the head of the man watching TV. The man turns round; it's not the right man, and we are stunned by the accepting astonishment on his face.

Then at last it happens: torturer and victim cross eyes in a restaurant. The film turns round to enter the psyche of the torturer, and the most extraordinary sequence begins. The torturer is haunted by a procession of figures he has betrayed or killed. As Banquo haunts Macbeth, as the Furies haunt Orestes, so through the black window-panes of his room rise a line of bloodstained, hanging, bandaged men, keening women. Working in studio conditions, posing and lighting these groups of figures, Papas achieves a heraldic theatrical power, which he instantly undercuts by a bleached flashback to the scene which haunts the torturer most. On a bare Cyprus plain the wind howls, and an identification parade is being held. Masked, he walks along lines of his countrymen, picks out the guilty, then seizes a gun from the British to finish them off himself. At which moment, in another of those deliberately still moments which are the film's strength, the bells of independence ring out, the men lower their hands, and in the foreground stands the torturer, knowing the time has come to pay.

After that it's all over bar the shooting, which takes place ceremonially in the domed labyrinth of the Roundhouse. The victim-turned-avenger sends the new victim scuttling round the gallery of this circular trap, and finally picks him off. As he lies there, the double doors open, bringing daylight and a crowd of comrades, or maybe future enemies. For the time being, the cycle of retribution has been played out.

This is astonishing for a first feature. The echoes of Hitchcock don't matter, the sometimes over-long sequences can't destroy the fierceness of Papas' concern. For all that it seems to be a film about the private worlds of these interlocked victims/executioners, the effect in a British context now is a gust of chill reality. It is as if we never acknowledged the right of the colonised to share such darkness, their private right as much as ours.

The priest is the guardian of the absolute, upholding the traditional cult of the final and the obvious. The jester is... he who questions what appears to be self-evident... In certain epochs the conflict between

the philosophy of the jester and that of the priest resembles a contest between the irritating features of the adolescent and the irritating features of senility. The difference is this: only the former are curable...

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI, Polish philosopher, 1959

Jerzy Skolimowski's *Barrier* is the freest of these four films. It has a jester's freedom, the confidence of a man who knows his world deeply, who has measured the possibilities his history allows, and can rise to the surface holding scraps and fragments together in strange combinations which may seem mad, but make desperate sense. In the very texture of this film, the way we are led into situations, the way Skolimowski plays, we recognise a cool wisdom.

It is basically a boy/girl story. He is a medical student, deciding to cop out of the social assembly-line. She is a tram-driver, a lovely plump blonde, magical in sheepskin coat and boots. They come together, are torn apart, at the end meet again. Like a Godard film, the elements are simple, naive. But Skolimowski weaves an eye-opening chain of images.

The film plunges us into the stuff of daily life, pushing our noses up against situations, intriguing us with strange actions, only later drawing back to establish what is "really" the case. Take the opening. Close-up of hands lashed together in the small of the back. Voices intoning words of protest. The body, photographed from behind, leans forward, topples over, like falling off a cliff. It is frightening, we feel we're in some kind of torture-place. Then the camera pulls back, and we see it's only four medical students playing a game where you kneel on a table and try to catch a suspended matchbox in your teeth, no hands allowed. The winner earns the piggy-bank in which money for fees has been saved. This is one of those hard-edged Polish truth-games, lucid metaphors pushed to a cartoon clarity.

Around these truth-games lies the heritage of Poland past and present. Our hero, having caught the matchbox, goes out to a world which is full of old age, identical raincoated commuters held up at traffic lights, posters exhorting you to donate blood, and everywhere eternal Polish Easter with its candles and off-screen choirs intoning Hallelujahs in a hundred different styles. Heroic nineteenth century Poland looms: the boy's father wants him to redeem his cavalry sword. He goes to the pawnbroker, a lecherous well-built lady living among hunting trophies. He escapes her advances, and is out in the street clutching his anachronistic Excalibur. There he meets the girl. They sit by a brazier face to face while cars

(Continued on page 51)

"THE PRIVATE RIGHT".



IN THE PICTURE

1966

Films of the Year

ALPHAVILLE *** AU HASARD, BALTHAZAR *** AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON *** A BLONDE IN LOVE *** CUL-DE-SAC *** THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL *** FAHRENHEIT 451 *** LA GUERRE EST FINIE *** LILITH *** PIERROT LE FOU *** I PUGNI IN TASCA *** THE ROUND-UP *** SEVEN WOMEN *** THOMAS L'IMPOSTEUR.

Mixed Bouquets

TO MARTITA HUNT and Laurence Olivier, bizarre old lady and quizzical cop, for running away with *Bunny Lake is Missing*; Charlton Heston, for wiping the floor with Laurence Olivier in *Khartoum*, and re-asserting (yet again) his claim to be taken seriously; Bardot and Moreau for having such fun—and providing it—in *Viva Maria*; James Coburn, for emerging as a star after years of scene-stealing, and displaying enough accomplishments for six James Bonds in *Our Man Flint*; Burton and Taylor for surprising everybody in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; Geneviève Bujold, the year's most enchanting newcomer, and Alan Arkin, the most amusing.

To Janice Rule for proving, after being given a chance in *Invitation to a Gunfighter*, that she really is an actress (*The Chase*, *Alvarez Kelly*); the girls in *The Group* for the best all-round performance by a cast; Kevin McCarthy and Margaret Johnston for years of sympathetic, more or less unsung excellence (as, respectively, the courteous gambler in *Big Deal at Dodge City* and the doll-obsessed maniac in *The Psychopath*); Lana Turner and *Madame X* for bringing out the hankies in the stalls again.

Comeback of the year by Sidney Buchman with his superbly organised script for *The Group*; all camerawork prizes snared by Coutard and the late Gianni Di Venanzo, with special mention to Gilbert Taylor's discreet *Cul-de-Sac* and Jean Rabier's bravura *Le Tigre se parfume à la dynamite*; bravest try against the system by Cornel Wilde with *The Naked Prey*; most sympathetic failure by Jack Smight in his attempt to bring back the world of Bogey and Bacall in *The Moving Target*; ghastliest mistake of the year—the remakes of *Stagecoach* and *Beau Geste*, *ex-aequo*; special congratulations to Kevin Brownlow for finally seeing *It Happened Here* screened in the West End after all these years.

Obituary

JANUARY: Herbert Marshall, suave seducer of many a movie and Bette Davis' victim in *The Little Foxes*; Betty Stockfield, equally at home in French and British films, and last seen here on the stage ten years ago as a brilliant "Madame" in Genet's *The Maids*; Frank Nugent, scriptwriter of many of Ford's later Westerns.

FEBRUARY: Buster Keaton, at a time when, after years of neglect, the world had begun to recognise that he was the greatest silent comedian of them all; followed four months later by Ed Wynn, the man with whom he recreated 1917's *The Butcher Boy* for television, in homage to another silent great, Roscoe Arbuckle. Also in February, Hedda Hopper, loved for her hats; Sophie Tucker, Red Hot Mamma; Elizabeth Patterson, specialist in grumpy grannies with hearts of gold; Gianni Di Venanzo; Frank Pettingell; Herbert J. Yates, Czar of Republic Pictures; and Robert Rossen, too soon to see his

Lilith rescued from oblivion.

MARCH: Irwin Piscator, one of the theatre directors who made the German Twenties great, director of one remarkable film, *The Revolt of the Fishermen*; Alice Pearce, amiable portrayer of ladies at whom men don't make passes.

JUNE: Wallace Ford, young hero of *Freaks* and grizzled veteran of any number of Westerns; Natacha Rambova, designer of the Nazimova *Salome*.

JULY: Julien Carette, l'homme moyen français, immortalised by Renoir in *La Grande Illusion* and *La Règle du Jeu*; Montgomery Clift.

AUGUST: Francis X. Bushman, Ramon Novarro's opponent in *Ben-Hur*, forced to languish for years in second features; Jeanne de Casalis; Henri Fescourt, friend and contemporary of Feuillade, director of one of the best versions of *Les Misérables* (1925).

SEPTEMBER: Nicolai Cherkassov, sculptural hero of *Ivan the Terrible* and *Alexander Nevsky*; Seena Owen, Griffith's Princess

JEAN-LOUIS TRINTIGNANT IN ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET'S "TRANS EUROP EXPRESS".



Beloved (*Intolerance*) and Stroheim's Queen-with-White-Cat (*Queen Kelly*).

OCTOBER: Wilfred Lawson, a great stage actor for whom the cinema never really found a role, though he stole *The Wrong Box* from everyone else with his portrayal of a crumbling butler; Wolfgang Staudte, director of *The Murderers Are Amongst Us* and *Roses for the Prosecutor*; Clifton Webb, the unforgettable Waldo Lydecker, acid gossip-writer of *Laura*.

Monopoly

REACTIONS TO THE Monopolies Commission Report on the film industry have been predictable. 'Realistic,' says the trade press of its recommendations. 'Timorous,' complain the independent producers. "If one didn't have a high regard for the members of the commission, one might describe their proposals as idiotic," John Boulting told *The Times*. Perhaps this is a case where the price of realism is bound to be a charge of timidity. Certainly the Report is conservative (small 'c') in that it holds back from ideas of drastic change on strictly pragmatic grounds.

The Commission's findings are sufficiently unequivocal. "More than one-third by value . . . of the films supplied to exhibitors in Great Britain are supplied to companies within the Rank Organisation." Rank and ABC "so conduct their respective affairs as to restrict competition in connection with the supply of films." Trade 'barring' practices "restrict the freedom of distributors to offer films to other exhibitors." Various trade practices operate against the public interest, in putting added limitations on freedom of choice.

In reaching these conclusions, the Report is lucid, explicit and usefully detached. At one point it refers, in an appealingly sceptical phrase, to the "almost hierarchical structure of the industry." The problems, as the Commission notes, go deeper than the simple fact that Rank and ABC operate from positions of such strength. Their circuits set patterns which the rest of the trade follow; and these patterns are naturally governed by their own needs, which are on the whole for mass audience films to keep large cinemas in business.

In France (5,592 cinemas at the end of 1964) and Germany (5,569 at the same date) there are more and smaller cinemas. Britain now has just under 2,000 cinemas, of which Rank and ABC control some 600. But they control nearly three-quarters of the country's 400 really big cinemas—1,500 seats and over. Inevitably, the circuits are involved in a big cinema policy, with everything that entails. Rank, indeed, stated in evidence that it "seeks to exhibit as many films as possible which will have high entertainment value for the mass audiences for which it primarily caters."

Fair enough: Rank is not in the minority audience business, and no amount of wishful thinking is likely to get it there. But one can simplify the basic problem into three main factors. Too many British cinemas are too big to make practicable the more flexible, experimental type of programming that would give the public a wider choice. Because of industry practices which have hardened over the years, smaller cinemas are cut off from the big first-run money-makers, so that "an independent cinema which wants to show some minority films cannot as a rule get access to a good selection of popular films as well." And the result is a kind of caste system for both films and cinemas: an artificial distinction



JEAN-PAUL BELMONDO IN LOUIS MALLE'S "LE VOLEUR".

between 'majority' and 'minority' not encountered elsewhere in the world.

Alternative solutions have been thrashed out laboriously over the years. Some people still cling, almost it seems as an article of faith, to the old third circuit theory. They haven't been able to persuade the Commission that there are either the finances, the films or the audiences to make it work. There is the idea, on the face of it more attractive, of fragmented booking arrangements, not breaking up the circuits but reducing their dominating bargaining power. The Commission again had to decide whether it would actually work; and concluded that such solutions "offer insufficient assurance of benefit to justify the difficulty and upheaval that they would entail."

So the Commission comes down in favour of a more free and flexible market, recommends discontinuation of some trade practices, and leaves it to Rank and ABC to try to give "limited . . . circuit bookings to films of limited appeal." It may not seem much of a solution, but is the problem really on these terms a soluble one? Mass audience films can find their circuit audience. It is the independent producers, trying to work on limited budgets, without American backing, and in areas not immediately popular, who have their backs to the wall. A film without obvious circuit potential is as likely as not going to remain unmade; and it is the films not being made rather than (as three years ago) the films not being shown that are causing so much frustration.

As the industry is constituted, such producers have to try for access to a majority

audience, even though they may be selling a minority product. Given a less rigid structure, a circuit release might not be their only solution. Are there other ways round the problem than those the Commission has considered and rejected? Its Report suggests that "the Government have at their disposal various instruments by which the development of . . . production could be encouraged along whatever lines were thought desirable." It could encourage certain types of film by exempting exhibitors from the levy. It could devote some levy money to 'quality' awards. It could strengthen the hand of the NFFC.

Are these ingenuous suggestions, encouraging the making of films which still would not get adequate screening? Would, for instance, the prospect of a 'quality' award to a film-maker, and exemption from the levy to exhibitors who showed his film, weigh in the balance against a circuit booking? Would directors choose low budgets and the hope of an award against American-scaled production? It would be a good deal simpler and cheaper to try to find the answers in practice than to test the consequences of dismantling the circuits.

On one issue, the Commission's sympathies seem with the independents. Rank, it recommends (with one dissenting voice), should "discontinue its practice of giving regular weekly bookings to its own documentary films, and should book documentary and other short films on their merits." Less *Look at Life* and more choice for the filmgoer, though the Commission also notes, as a somewhat melancholy caveat, that "producers of shorts do not appear to

fare any better in independent cinemas where they are not affected by any automatic preference for *Look at Life*."

All in all, one's sympathies are with the Commission. Even the definition of 'film' given in their terms of reference is mysteriously forbidding: "'film' means any record, however made, of a sequence of visual images, which is a record capable of being used as a means of showing that sequence as a moving picture." Once you get beyond this sort of legal definition, 'film' means a specific film, to be judged 'on its merits'. But how is Rank, say, to decide that another short has more 'merit' than *Look at Life*, or that other than box-office standards entitle a feature to a limited run? Commercial companies can hardly be blamed for thinking commercially. And to quote the *Financial Times*: "the whole history of Government relations with the film industry suggests strongly that a rigid line should be drawn between subsidising art and subsidising commercial inefficiency." If the Government could bring itself to draw that line, which was not the Commission's business, then we could see more clearly where we are.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

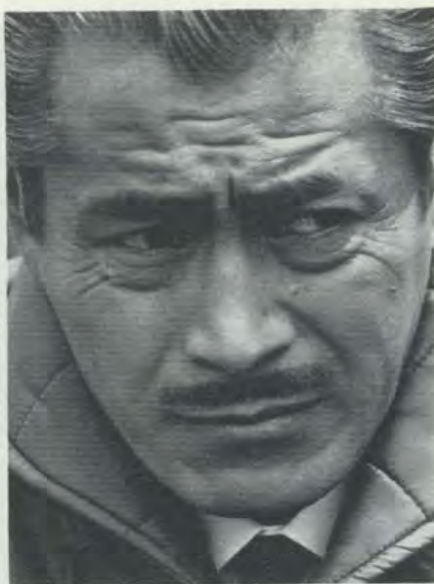
Le Voleur

COMMUNICATION WITH A director during shooting is a delicate affair. There is the question of money, when every minute costs hundreds of pounds; there is the problem of time. Louis Malle is directing and co-producing a film with a budget of over a million pounds, happens to be the kind of perfectionist who may repeat a take twenty times to get what he wants, and finds it impossible (understandably) to talk about a film that has not been completed. Things are not made easier when one finds that his calculated reserve is matched by unjustified pessimism. During shooting of *Le Feu Follet* he was under the impression that he was making his worst film. "A chaque nouveau film que je fais j'ai l'impression d'en savoir moins que la fois avant."

Le Voleur, based on a *fin de siècle* novel by Georges Darien, is adapted by Malle and Jean-Claude Carrière, with dialogue by Daniel Boulanger. The story concerns a young man whose considerable inheritance has been pocketed by his uncle and who decides to become a professional thief. From time to time he slips into bed with a female accomplice; he even manages to fall in love with his cousin before becoming finally resigned to the fact that nothing is more important to him than cracking safes and emptying the pockets of rich Belgian businessmen. *Le voleur* is neither anarchist, anti-bourgeois, delinquent, nor anything else that can be conveniently labelled. He is simply an individual who steals for the sake of stealing.

It is this quality of individualism that prompted André Breton to write a preface to the novel in 1955, and it is the same quality that Malle singles out. Perhaps it is not too much to say that variations on this theme provide the key to the series of six films that started with *L'Ascenseur pour l'Echafaud*. Malle had the idea of doing *Le Voleur* before filming *Viva Maria*, then decided that the project was too ambitious and should be shelved. It was his meeting with Jean-Paul Belmondo, much later, that set things in motion again.

Le voleur is a determined, rather grim character—not always suited to Belmondo's explosive, joke-cracking temperament. Malle must have worked hard to find a compromise. Geneviève Bujold (*La Guerre est*



TOSHIRO MIFUNE IN "GRAND PRIX".

Finie), Marie Dubois (*Jules et Jim*) and Bernadette Lafont (*Le Beau Serge*) are there to humour *le voleur* when he is not too busy with the safes. The painter Ghislain Uhry, who created the costumes and was colour adviser on *Viva Maria*, is in the studio every day. The cameraman is Henri Decaë, who is faced with the problem of rendering the colour (Eastman Colour) in several interiors with subdued lighting.

The atmosphere in the studio can be pretty tense—that is, until Belmondo arrives. On one occasion the technicians packed up and went home. Work was out of the question because no one could stop laughing. There are occasional visits from some of Louis Malle's friends: Volker Schlöndorff, for instance, and Luis Buñuel, whose son Jean-Louis is first assistant on *Le Voleur* and whose own *Belle de Jour* is also in production at the St. Maurice studios. There are a few exteriors in *Le Voleur*, one of the most spectacular being a guillotine scene where a public execution was staged at the Place St. Pierre in Senlis. Malle, as accurate and exact as ever, used a real guillotine that was doing speedy work during An II de la République on the Place de la Concorde.

Publicity for *Le Voleur* is limited for the moment, and filming takes place with a maximum of secrecy. Maybe this is a reaction against the not over-successful results that were accomplished by the publicity drive for *Viva Maria*?

ADRIAN MABEN

The Hero as Hero

EVERYTHING ABOUT Toshiro Mifune suggests a sort of decorum not currently fashionable, in the West at least. Face to face you cannot help being put in mind of Clark Gable, brilliant hair and all. Apart from the height there is a difference though: there is about Mifune an air of high seriousness, even moral purpose, which you would after all expect from the hero of *The Seven Samurai*.

In Milan a couple of months ago Mifune was just finishing his first Occidental film: John Frankenheimer's Cinerama epic about motor racing *Grand Prix*. He plays the manager of the winning Japanese team, dressed in an immaculate grey suiting, his Paisley tie held in place with a single pearl pin. He speaks of the vulgarity of sections

of the Japanese film industry; of the new production company he has formed; and of competition from television. From time to time his hand unnecessarily smooths hair.

Mifune was the first star Frankenheimer signed. It was chance, he says. "I met Frankenheimer and liked his work." He had also been on the look-out for a role outside Japan. "Mr. Mifune," explained the interpreter (for strangely Mifune speaks no English and learned his part phonetically), "Mr. Mifune has a special position in Japan. You see he was the actor who was first successful in the West (*Rashomon* at Venice in 1951) and after the war that was important for us." One suspects that this role of hero is the most difficult Mifune has ever had to play.

IAN WRIGHT

The Peace Game

DURING THE LEIPZIG festival in November the British delegation visited a teachers' training centre outside the town. Welcomed by smiling girls, we were treated to tea and a speech about donating blood to Vietnam. An attentive audience watched the four British shorts we had taken along; a young teacher spoke at length about American brutality and imperialism; and a discussion began about the political convictions of the directors present—Peter Smith, maker of *Knees Up, Mother Brown* (which by the end of the Festival he was morosely thinking of retitling *Hands Up, Mother Brown*), and Tom Scott Robson, whose *Low Water* won no prizes but was one of the hits of the week.

Our hosts hailed Smith and Robson as dedicated humanists with a clear affection for the honest labour and integrity of the British worker. In a concluding tribute, the head of the centre took the opportunity to remind the assembled company about the Americans in Vietnam, and the delegates were divided up among the teachers to be plied with cognac. "Perhaps," murmured my appointed drinking partner, rimless spectacles glinting over the discreet Party badge at his lapel, "we can now proceed to a more detailed discussion." Opposite me, a man with shining black gloves instead of hands looked blandly eager . . .

Looking back, Leipzig seems to have been all like this. The theme was 'Films of the World for the Peace of the World', but despite reiteration before each programme it got consistently mislaid among films from the East about warmongers in the West. For a week, we watched a parade of bombings, tortures, raw wounds, executions and decapitations, from seemingly every war of the past fifty years. The same Vietnam footage of terrified faces and destroyed homes turned up so often that it became impossible to tell one film from another. (Rather late in the week, when James Cameron's ramblingly sympathetic *Western Eye-Witness in Vietnam* was shown, it was evident that this was the original source for much of the material.) In an odd process of doublethink, the Americans were credited with both the crushing of Nazism and aggression in South East Asia—often in the same film. Cheers shook the cinema whenever an American plane was apparently shot down on the screen. Whatever one's convictions about Vietnam, such cheers take some getting used to.

In conversation, bitter comments about West Germany recurred. A conference about the artist's responsibility to his age descended instantly to a heated argument between East and West Germans about ex-Nazis in government posts in the Federal Republic.

If any film came into the affair at all, it was *The Laughing Man*, a striking television interview with Siegfried 'Congo' Muller in which he describes with pride his activities as a mercenary in Tshombe's army. The conference continued what had apparently been a press battle (about Muller, not the film) ever since it was transmitted.

A simple message, it would seem, goes a long way in Leipzig. *The War Game's* message, however, got nowhere at all. I found the East Germans generous and charming without exception. But the adamant refusal to screen Peter Watkins' film (which the Selection Committee had invited for viewing) was an illuminating demonstration of their official mind at work.

Officially, the Berlin Wall could never be a source of tension; officially, no Eastern country could ever drop a nuclear bomb on England. Useless to argue that politics are irrelevant to the film's concern with the global futility of the deterrent and the particular helplessness of civilians ("Here they say you can protect yourself by putting a suitcase over your head," one man said to me privately). It could not be shown because—as the Head of the Festival put it—it would 'surprise' Leipzig audiences. And that went for the rest of East Germany as well.

By the end of the week, I couldn't help feeling that a few surprises would have done the Festival all the good in the world.

PHILIP STRICK

London Film Co-operative

'THE STAR OF HOLLYWOOD sets. The French New Wave flattens out. The era of personal revelation through the cine-camera opens ...'

So runs the editorial in the first issue of CINIM, a magazine launched in conjunction with the London branch of the International Association of Film Co-operatives. The original Co-operative was founded in New York four years ago as a distribution centre for independent, non-commercial film-makers. The London branch will be organised on similar lines: films deposited with the Co-operative are made available for open screenings and for a distribution circuit, with the income from hire charges split between the Co-operative and the film-maker. The Co-operative will provide technical advice and a pool of equipment for film-makers, and the eventual aim is that film prints should be sold over the counter in bookshops and general stores.

These plans were outlined—at an appropriately underground press conference, in a basement room beneath a London bookshop—by Harvey Matusow, chairman of the London Co-operative. The British press was hardly there in force, but it might have been something more than a coincidence that several American reporters thought it worthwhile attending. For, as the *London Evening News* was later to reveal, before Mr. Matusow became a maker of underground movies he earned himself something of a reputation in America as a professional anti-Communist of the McCarthy era, and was found guilty of giving false testimony before the Committee.

Mr. Matusow is now a film-maker himself (projects include a fantasy about the McCarthy era, to be called "The Stringless Yo-Yo"), and one of his films, made under the influence of LSD, was shown at a Spontaneous Festival of Underground Films recently held in London. Whatever its future as a focal point for the making of films, it looks as though the London Co-operative will not perish for lack of films to distribute.

Several all-night screenings have already been organised. And Jonas Mekas is apparently importing a batch of films from America.

The Film Co-operative aims to be comprehensive in the range of films with which it deals. There is much talk of the inter-compatibility of the arts (a film composed to an electronic music track), and one can trace an affinity with the recent Destruction in Art gatherings. One of the films already shown, for instance, was an abstract work about books, projected on to two men dressed in books and blissfully engaged in tearing each other to pieces. While the film-makers assert their independence, the Muses, it seems, are destined to lose theirs. Still, there is always room for innovation.

As for CINIM, a symposium on Godard reveals him as a "Swiss Calvinist ... who wears dark glasses to hide from the world the fact that he's in a permanent state of ocular masturbation ..."

DAVID WILSON

Work in Progress

Great Britain

JACK CLAYTON: *Our Mother's House*, scripted by Jeremy Brooks from Julian Gloag's novel about a family of orphans. South London locations, with production H.Q. in Croydon. With Dirk Bogarde and Pamela Franklin. Heron/Filmways.

ALBERT FINNEY: Directs and stars in *Charlie Bubbles*, colour comedy with Lancashire locations and a Shelagh Delany script. With Billie Whitelaw, Colin Blakely, Liza Minnelli. Memorial/Universal.

PETER HALL: Scheduled to kick off as a film director with an adaptation from the stage: *Work is a Four Letter Word*, the six-word retitling of Henry Livings' comedy *Eh? Cavalcade*/Universal.

JOHN SCHLESINGER: *Far from the Madding Crowd*, with Julie Christie as Bathsheba, Alan Bates as Gabriel Oak, Peter Finch as

Boldwood, Terence Stamp as Sergeant Troy. Script by Frederic Raphael, production design by Richard Macdonald. Shooting entirely in the Hardy country, around Weymouth. Anglo-MGM/Warner Pathé.

United States

CURTIS HARRINGTON: *Games*, with Simone Signoret as a mysterious lady from Europe who insinuates herself into the house and lives of a rich young American couple. James Caan and Katherine Ross play her victims, in what Harrington describes as "a thriller, highly contemporary in theme." Universal.

JOHN HUSTON: Carson McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, with locations in Rome (camerawork by Aldo Tonti) and some American shooting. High-powered cast headed by Brando, Elizabeth Taylor, Julie Harris. Warner Brothers.

NORMAN JEWISON: *In the Heat of the Night*, thriller about a sophisticated Negro detective up against race prejudice as well as crime. With Sidney Poitier, Rod Steiger; location shooting in Illinois (cameraman: Haskell Wexler). Mirisch/United Artists.

France

ROBERT BRESSON: Follows *Balthazar* with *Mouchette*, from a novel by Georges Bernanos. Locations in Haute Provence; camerawork by Ghislain Cloquet; usual non-professional cast. Argos Film/Parc Films.

LUIS BUNUEL: *Belle de Jour*, an adaptation by Buñuel and Jean-Claude Carrière of Joseph Kessel's novel about a married woman who takes to spending her afternoons in a brothel. With Catherine Deneuve, Jean Sorel, Michel Piccoli. Paris Film/Interopa (Rome).

ALAIN JESSUA: *Jeu de Massacre*, Eastman Colour comedy, scripted by Jessua, about a strip cartoonist, his wife, and a young reader who is trying to make life keep pace with strip art. With Jean-Pierre Cassel, Claudine Auger. Francinor.

JULIE CHRISTIE AND TERENCE STAMP IN JOHN SCHLESINGER'S "FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD".



HUMPHREY & BOGEY



BY

*Louise
Brooks*

HUMPHREY BOGART SPENT THE LAST twenty-one years of his life laboriously converting the established character of a middle-aged man from that of a conventional, well-bred theatre actor named Humphrey to that which complemented his film roles—a rebellious tough known as Bogey. In the ten years since his death in 1957, with no more effort than it takes to type the comic-strip dream of a little boy's hero, biographers catering to the Bogey Cult have transformed him into a cinematic saint, in whom I can find scarcely a trace of the Humphrey I first knew in 1924 or the Bogey I last saw in 1943.

The youngest strokes in the portrait of St. Bogart are those which paint him as a 'loner', a man of 'self-determination' who makes 'all his own decisions' with regard for nothing beyond immediate satisfaction. Such a description might do for a fourth century St. Anthony of the Egyptian desert, but never for a twentieth century film star in Hollywood.

Being myself a born loner who was temporarily deflected from the hermit path by a career in the theatre and films, I can state categorically that in Bogart's time there was no other occupation in the world that so closely resembled enslavement as the career of a film star. He had self-determination only in this: he might or he might not sign a film contract. If he signed the contract he became subject to those who paid his salary and released his films. If he did not sign the contract, he was no film star. I, for example, when I was under contract to Paramount in 1928, complained about being forced to hang around Hollywood waiting to make some film. "That's what we are paying you for," was the harsh comment of the front office, "your time." "You mean my life," I amended to myself.

When the coming of talkies made the cutting of actors' salaries practicable and I was the only one on the lot who refused to take a cut and thereby lost my contract, I doubted that such 'uncooperative' decisions would lengthen my career. When I was the only one of the cast who refused to return to make the talkie version of my last silent film there, *The Canary Murder Case*, the studio doused me with ugly publicity and made my doubts a certainty. In later years at Warner Brothers, when Bogart, following the lead of James Cagney and Errol Flynn, would go on strike, braying for better films and more money, the studio made a pleasant game of it. The actors were allowed a triumphant interval in which to feel like lords of the lot; the publicity stirred up by these mock battles was free and beneficial; and a great deal of money was saved while the actors' salaries were suspended. Studio contracts were always a joke, anyhow, as far as actors were concerned. Studios could break them at will; the actors were bound by their fear of impoverishing law suits and permanent unemployment.

As a loner, my two most precious rights are those which allow me to choose the periods of my aloneness and to choose the people with whom I will spend the periods of my not-aloneness. To be let alone for an instant is terrifying to a film star. It is the first signpost leading to oblivion. Obviously an actor cannot choose the people with whom he will work, or when or how he will work with them. He goes to work at a time specified by the studio. He spends his working day not only under the control of his director, but also of the script-writer, the cameraman, the wardrobe department, and the publicity office.

Since publicity is the life blood of stardom without which a star will die, it is equally obvious that he must keep it flowing through his private life which feeds the envy and curiosity that bring many people into theatres. Having rightly ascribed much of his previous failure in the theatre and films to a lack of publicity value, from the moment Bogart settled at Warner

Brothers in 1936, all his time not spent before the camera was spent with journalists and columnists who invented for him the private character of Bogey. They carved him into the desired peg upon which they could hang their favourite ancient gags and bar-room fables. A small part of Bogey's character was founded on his film roles; the greater part was founded on the pranks of those rats of the underworld idolised by the ex-columnist, producer Mark Hellinger. During the last ten years of his life, driven by his ferocious ambition, Humphrey Bogart allowed himself to be formed into a coarse and drunken bully, a puppet Iago who fomented evil without a motive.

* * *

In 1924 my first impression of Humphrey Bogart was of a slim boy with charming manners, who was extraordinarily quiet for an actor. His handsome face was made extraordinary by a most beautiful mouth. It was very full, rosy, and perfectly modelled. To make it completely fascinating, at one corner of his upper lip a scarred quilted piece hung down in a tiny scallop. When Humphrey went into films, a surgeon sewed up the scallop. Photographically it was an improvement, but I missed this endearing disfigurement. The scar on his lip has

THE 'WELL-BRED THEATRE ACTOR' IN "A DEVIL WITH WOMEN" (1930). WITH CAGNEY IN "THE OKLAHOMA KID" (1939).



LEFT: SHADOW OF BOGART IN "CASABLANCA". THE PHOTOGRAPH OF LOUISE BROOKS IS A PARAMOUNT PUBLICITY STILL OF 1928.

since become a symbol of his heroism. In those early years it was taken for granted that he got punched in the mouth at some speakeasy. When Humphrey drank he became exhausted and occasionally fell asleep (as in *Casablanca*) with his head in his arms on the table. If rudely shaken awake he would say something rude and sometimes got socked for it. On this occasion he purposely did not get his split lip sewed up because he both loved and hated his beautiful mouth. America, in the Twenties, was exclusively Western in its ideas of beauty and vulgar people made fun of Humphrey's 'nigger lips'.

The lip wound gave him no speech impediment either before or after it was mended. But when he at last made a hit in films, observing how much an unusual feature, such as Clark Gable's prominent ears, added to the publicity value of a star, he decided to exploit his mouth. Over the years Bogey practised all kinds of lip gymnastics accompanied by nasal tones, snarls, lisps, and slurs. His painful wince, his leer, his fiendish grin were the most accomplished ever seen on film. Only Erich von Stroheim was his master in lip-twitching.

But in 1924 Humphrey was speaking his lines with a well projected baritone and good diction in a small part in a play in New York called *Nerves*. Mary Phillips also had a small part in *Nerves*. Kenneth MacKenna played a leading role. The play would have been a good deal more nervous had they known that after Humphrey was married and divorced by Helen Menken he would marry Mary Phillips; and that after Kenneth was married and divorced by Kay Francis he would marry Mary Phillips who had divorced Humphrey.

With a view to future entanglements, the theatrical season of 1925-26 was even more intriguing. James Cagney, who was to become Humphrey's red-headed *bête noire* at Warner Brothers, was playing in *Outside Looking In*; Leslie Howard, who was to put Humphrey in a position to rival Cagney, was playing in *The Green Hat*; Helen Menken, in *Makropoulos Secret*; Mary Phillips, in *The Wisdom Tooth*; and wife number three, Mayo Methot, in *Alias the Deacon*. In *The Cradle Snatchers*, Humphrey was playing a college boy being snatched by middle-aged Mary Boland, while off-stage in the Bronx the year-old Lauren Bacall lay in her cradle waiting for Bogey to snatch her twenty years later as wife number four.

Dismissing Humphrey's theatrical career with a press notice loses much of its point when the facts are examined. From the season 1921-22 when he first appeared on Broadway with Alice Brady in *Drifting*, through the season 1929-30 when he got his first Hollywood contract, 2,044 plays were

produced in New York. Out of a possible two thousand young American dramatic actors working in those plays, only four besides Bogart became major film stars—Cagney, Tracy, Fredric March, and Clark Gable. Because, whether or not they confess it as frankly as Barbra Streisand who said, "To me being really famous is being a movie star," that is the goal of all actors in the theatre.

In 1930 Humphrey's Hollywood failure was as predictable as was Cagney's success. Cagney's character was already a gaudy perfection in the theatre. In *Penny Arcade*, the play that won him his film contract with Warner Brothers, Jimmie appeared as the same little hoodlum killer that made him famous in films. Bogart was selected out of *It's a Wise Child*, in which he played a gentlemanly young cad with only his good looks to recommend him to Hollywood producers, who were never inspired in casting an actor who had not yet established his own characterisation. Writers who never saw him on the stage cannot uncover the bitterness in Bogey's 'favourite' review by Alexander Woollcott, who described his performance in *Swiftly* as 'inadequate'. To be mentioned at all in any review amounted to praise for Bogart. On the stage he was as formless as an impression lost through lack of meditation, as blurred as a name inked on blotting paper.

* * *

In the Twenties, under the supervision of old producers like David Belasco, stage direction dated back to the feverish technique of the English theatre before the plays of Ibsen, Chekhov, and Bernard Shaw revolutionised it, introducing what Lytton Strachey called "a new quiet and subtle style of acting—a prose style." In New York we began to realise how bad were our directors and actors when English stars began to appear on Broadway. There was Lynn Fontanne in *Pygmalion*, Roland Young in *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney*, Leslie Howard in *Berkeley Square*, and Gertrude Lawrence and Noël Coward in *Private Lives*. These marvellous actors of realism spoke their lines as if they had just thought of them. They moved about the stage with ease. And they actually paid attention to—they actually *heard* what other actors were saying. The conventional Broadway technique exposed more showing-off than acting, more of a fight than a play. Every actor's aim was to kill the other actors' lines, especially if the lines provoked laughter. Ina Claire was celebrated for waving a large chiffon handkerchief on other actors' lines and forcing them to work with their backs to the audience. Far from being criticised, she was envied for such tricks.

After thirteen years of conditioning to this kind of 'stage' acting, when Bogart got a job in *The Petrified Forest*, which opened in January 1935, nothing but searching ambition could have enabled him to see in Leslie Howard's quiet, natural acting technique a style he could adapt to his own personality. Nothing but inflexible will-power could have enabled him to tear down his ingrained acting habits in order to begin all over again the self-conscious agony of learning to act. Working with Leslie gave him command of the Duke Mantee part in the play and in the film; but the films of the following five years reveal the terrible struggle for supremacy engaged in by the new Bogey technique with the old theatrical habits of Humphrey. With a poor director, Frank McDonald, in *The Isle of Fury* he was Humphrey again, reciting his memorised lines, striking attitudes while he waited for the other actors to get done with theirs. In *Dark Victory*, working with a great director, Edmund Goulding, who was also a great clown, acting with the emotional Bette Davis who could fire up on the word 'camera', he was stricken with grotesque, amateur embarrassment.

Unlike most technical actors, Humphrey was extremely sensitive to his director. But like most actors from the theatre, he was slow in building a mood and grimly serious about maintaining it. James Cagney, in *The Roaring Twenties*, split him in a confusion between Bogey and Humphrey. Cagney's swift dialogue and his swift movements, which had the glitter and precision of a meat slicer, were impossible to anticipate or counter-attack. Humphrey was at his best working with

WITH LESLIE HOWARD IN "STAND IN" (1937).



less inspired and more technical actors such as Walter Huston.

He was also at his best playing an inarticulate, uncomplicated character like the punk in *San Quentin*. His senseless pursuit of death became pathetic, even noble, because it came out of his own unconquerable perseverance in pursuing stardom. In *The Maltese Falcon* his part was uncomplicated, but too much dialogue betrayed the fact that his miserable theatrical training had left him permanently afraid of words. In short speeches he cleverly masked his fear with his tricks of mouth and voice. But when he was allotted part of the burden of exposition in this film, his eyes glazed and invisible comic strip balloons circled his dialogue. More unfortunate were his efforts at repartee with Mary Astor in *Across the Pacific*.

In his last films, it was not the theatre Humphrey who overcame Bogey, but the real man, Humphrey Bogart, whose fundamental inertia had always menaced his career. As a dead soul waiting for release in death in *The Desperate Hours*, he was incomparable until, unaccountably, a sentimental heart began to beat, and he handed over the film to Fredric March.

However, before inertia set in, he played one fascinatingly complex character, craftily directed by Nicholas Ray, in a film whose title perfectly defined Humphrey's own isolation among people. In *a Lonely Place* gave him a role that he could play with complexity because the film character's, the screenwriter's, pride in his art, his selfishness, his drunkenness, his lack of energy stabbed with lightning strokes of violence, were shared equally by the real Bogart. In his preface to *The Doctor's Dilemma*, Bernard Shaw wrote: "No man who is occupied in doing a very difficult thing, and doing it very well, ever loses his self-respect. The common man may have to found his self-respect on sobriety, honesty and industry; but an artist needs no such props for his sense of dignity . . . The truth is, hardly any of us have energy enough for more than one really inflexible point of honour. An actor, a painter, a composer, an author, may be as selfish as he likes without reproach from the public if only his art is superb; and he cannot fulfil this condition without sufficient effort and sacrifice to make him feel noble and martyred in spite of his selfishness."

* * *

Superficially, Humphrey's character and way of life so little resembled that of the secure and temperate Leslie Howard that what induced Leslie to become his guide and champion is not immediately apparent. I, myself, would never have known the reason for his sympathetic attitude towards Humphrey had I not met Leslie in New York in November 1931 when he was rehearsing his new play, *The Animal Kingdom*.

It was on the afternoon of my twenty-fifth birthday that George Marshall (not the director but the owner of the professional football team, the Washington Redskins) announced that he was going to celebrate the event by taking me to dinner at the Casino in the Park with Leslie Howard and his wife. I was surprised and pleased, not only because George was mad at me for turning down an offer to work for RKO in Hollywood, but also because he so little liked spending unnecessary money on me that the last time I spoke to him on the 'phone in 1960, he was still wondering why he had given me a mink coat in 1928.

Con conversationally, the dinner party was not well balanced. When I was with George I said little, fearing that I might give him material for an enquiry into how I spent my time when he was away in Washington. Leslie, who had evidently accepted the invitation because he enjoyed George's performances, said nothing. Mrs. Howard, a large woman who looked more like his mother than his wife, tried to inject gracious remarks here and there in the stream of George's witty stories, but his loud voice was as hard on them as it was on Eddie Duchin's orchestra. George was a big man of thirty-five who looked rather like a redskin himself, with a blanket replaced by evening dress, and a bottle of fire-water by a martini glass. At the end of each story he would let out a self-appreciative haw-haw-haw and then clap Leslie on the back with such enthusiasm that Leslie would crumple over the table like a paper angel.

Dinner ended, George asked Mrs. Howard to dance and Leslie and I were left alone at the table regarding each other. I opened the conversation: "I hate my dress. Bernard Newman at Bergdorf-Goodman talked me into buying it—but it's much too young for me." Leslie studied my lettuce green organza evening dress with its full skirt, short sleeves, and baby collar. I turned in my chair to show him the bow in back. "What do you usually wear?" he asked. "Oh, something white and glittery with no back and cut down to here in front." He thought about this for a moment and then we both laughed and had another glass of champagne. He had become suddenly, brilliantly alive. His famous watchful eyes began to sparkle mischievously as we compared our impressions of Hollywood. As much as I, he detested having to sit most of the day in the studio waiting for sets and lights to be changed. And then he talked about the theatre, how he dreaded having to study a

BOGEY—IN HIS LAST FILM, "THE HARDER THEY FALL" (1956). WITH MARY ASTOR AND SYDNEY GREENSTREET IN "ACROSS THE PACIFIC" (1942).



new part, how slow he was at learning his lines. I laughed in disbelief. "You're kidding me!" "No, it's perfectly true," he said. "I wasn't cut out to be an actor. I haven't the energy for acting—it's too exhausting."

When Mrs. Howard and George returned from their dance and observed our happy intimacy, they decided to take us home. In the cab, Mrs. Howard and I sat on the back seat facing George and Leslie on the jump seats. My knees touched Leslie's and we smiled at each other. But I knew when we said goodnight that I would not see him again. It would be too exhausting.

It was the recognition of this same threatening exhaustion in Humphrey, I think, that touched Leslie's heart, leading him to force Jack Warner to give Humphrey the Duke Mantee part when *The Petrified Forest* was filmed. Furthermore, whereas from the beginning of his career Leslie had confessed his lack of energy and let it work for him in the creation of the quiet, natural actor, he saw that Humphrey fought his weakness, trying ineffectually to emulate the dynamic style of most successful actors. All this he conveyed to Humphrey in the direction of the play. And once he grasped the idea that he too might achieve success with some version of natural acting, Humphrey went about its contrivance with the cunning of a lover. For all actors know that truly natural acting is rejected by the audience. Although people are better equipped to judge acting than any other art, the hypocrisy of 'sincerity' prevents them from admitting that they too are always acting some part of their own invention. To be a successful actor, then, it is necessary to add some eccentricities and mystery to naturalness so that the audience can admire and puzzle over something different from itself.

Leslie's eccentricities were his passion for his pipe and his rather queer clothes. The mystery of his indestructible poise was the question of whether as an actor he wasn't playing a huge joke on everyone and getting paid for it. Bogart's eccentricities were the use of his mouth and speech. The mysterious ingredient of his poise was the moment of explosion. Leslie would have become less by revealing himself; by revealing himself, Bogart became more.

* * *

In doing research on Humphrey I was amazed to read the number of his 'recreations'. He played golf, tennis, bridge, chess. He sailed. He read books! Except on one occasion, the only thing I ever saw him do was sit and drink and talk with people. That one occasion was an evening in New York when he and I, Blyth Daly and Alice Brady played what Alice innocently called bridge in her apartment on East Fifty-Seventh Street. To begin with, she never stopped talking. Then as soon as the cards were dealt she would get up to mix drinks. After the bidding she would get up to empty ashtrays. When she was dummy she would go to the piano to play and sing in her French mother's tongue. At any time at all she would jump up with all her bracelets jingling to fly at one of her four yapping wire-haired fox terriers, who substituted her ivory satin window draperies for trees and lamp-posts. We were all relieved when her doorbell rang and Elsie Ferguson, with her handsome actor husband, came in for a nightcap after the theatre. The bridge game was over. Sipping a brandy across the room from me, Elsie was as beautiful in 1930 as she had been in films in 1918. And it was with the old film charm that she said goodnight a few minutes later, leaving Alice sitting on her husband's lap.

"How long have Alice and Elsie's husband known each other?" I asked Humphrey as we left the apartment building. He looked at me blankly. It was Blyth who answered, "You idiot, they just met!"

That blank look of Humphrey's was the key to his attitude towards sex. He was so contemptuous of other men's needs to publicise their amorous triumphs that he refused to notice them. Being himself supremely confident of his own attractiveness to women, he scorned every form of demonstrativeness. When a woman appealed to him, he waited for her like the flame waits for the moth.

"Man survives earthquakes, epidemics, the horrors of war, and all the agonies of the soul," wrote Tolstoi, "but the

tragedy that has always tormented him, and always will, is the tragedy of the bedroom." It was security in sex that preserved Humphrey's ego for success after he had endured, three times longer than any actor known to history, the bitterest humiliation, ridicule and failure. Certainly, no other actor could have read those two speeches in *Across the Pacific* with his peculiar emphasis. When Greenstreet showed him his gun, Bogey produced his and said, "My gun is bigger than your gun." And again later when he pulled his gun on Greenstreet, he said, "I told you—mine is bigger than yours."

Each of Humphrey's wives was fittingly chosen to meet the trials of his career. When he began to act and had so much to learn about the theatre, he married Helen Menken, the star of *Seventh Heaven*. Helen's white thin face was always ecstatically lifted up to her vision of the Drama. I never heard her talk about anything except the art of the theatre. They were divorced in 1927 after Helen had become a sensation in *The Captive*, closed by the district attorney on its 160th performance because of its lesbian theme. Humphrey worked that year the twelve pitiful performances of a comedy, *Baby Mine*, in which Roscoe Arbuckle tried to erase the scandal that had driven him from Hollywood. Except for a two-week revival of *Saturday's Children* in 1928, Humphrey did not work again on Broadway until 1929 when, with his new wife, Mary Phillips, he appeared in *Skyrocket*, which closed after eleven performances. "The art of the theatre" having become a sore subject, Mary was exactly right for him during the time he required comfort more than inspiration.

Besides Leslie Howard, no other person contributed so much to Humphrey's success as his third wife, Mayo Methot. He found her at a time of lethargy and loneliness when he might have gone on playing secondary gangster parts at Warner Brothers for a year and then out. But he met Mayo and she set fire to him. Those passions—envy, hatred and violence—which were essential to the Bogey character, which had been simmering beneath his failure for so many years, she brought to a boil, and blew the lid off all his inhibitions forever. Part of her mission was accomplished under my direct observation.

* * *

In October 1935, I left the Persian Room in New York, where I had been dancing with Dario, to make a test for the Republic Studio in Hollywood for a film, *Dancing Feet*. On the day after the test was completed and seen, the studio gave the part I had tested for to a blonde girl who couldn't dance. Having little money and no more faith in myself, I stayed on in Hollywood for lack of a better plan. I was living at the Ronda apartments, and one day I strolled down the street to the Garden of Allah, into the sitting-room of Robert Benchley's cottage, and there was Humphrey sitting on the floor, leaning against a sofa, with a glass of Scotch and soda in his hand. He had little to say about his part in *The Petrified Forest*, which was in production at Warner Brothers. Two unsuccessful experiences in Hollywood did not allow him to feel optimistic. Not feeling optimistic either was a boy from the M-G-M studio who had been sent to pick up a script that Bob had not yet begun to write.

The following evening I received a phone call from Mary Hooton, who was my old friend and a niece of Dwight Deere Wiman the theatrical producer. She said Humphrey and she were having a drink at her house (she had just become his agent), and that Humphrey would like me to join them. Coming from anyone else the invitation would have meant that two bored people wanted company. Coming from Humphrey it was nothing less than a declaration of love. Full of curiosity, I hastened to the scene. It was not a happy one. Humphrey was so intuitive about women that, after a glowing welcome, he retreated slowly into gloom and silence and Scotch, leaving the conversation to Mary and me. Riding home in the cab, I thought about the difference between Humphrey and me. He could love only a woman he had known a long time or, what amounted to the same thing, one who was flung at him in the intimacy of a play or film. To me, love was an adventure into the unknown.

The Petrified Forest had been released and Humphrey had

made a solid hit in it when I next saw him. It was early in the year of 1936 at the Beverly Hills home of Eric Hatch, who had written *My Man Godfrey*. When I went into the dining-room, Eric and his wife, Mischa Auer and his wife, and Humphrey were sitting at the table. Mrs. Hatch got up to pour me a cup of after-dinner coffee. As I drank it I watched Humphrey, whom I had never seen in such an emotional state. Everyone else was watching him too. Then the doorbell rang and, as if on cue, we all got up and went downstairs into the vaulted living-room to meet Mayo Methot who was entering from the hall. No moth was she! She burned in a sheath of peacock blue silk.

That night, instead of our usual talk and laughter, we became an audience galvanised by a scene of the most passionate love played out between Mayo and Humphrey without so much as a touch of hands. Drinks were mixed and seats were taken as Mayo moved restlessly to the gramophone and put on an old Argentine tango, *Adios Muchachos*. Her dance with Mischa began as a burlesque, with him throwing her about and glaring lustfully into her eyes. Gradually, however, her exquisitely persuasive body began to rule his movements and they danced in the falling arcs, the slow recoveries, and the voluptuous pauses of the true tango.

The spell was broken by a maid, who announced that Mayo's husband had telephoned to say that he was on his way to the house. Humphrey sprang from the sofa to whisk her away—but wait! She had taken off her slippers to dance, and now one of them could not be found. Everybody searched for it except me, which must have aroused Humphrey's suspicions because quite suddenly he lunged at me with the most hideous face, rasping, "God damn you, Louise, tell us where you hid Mayo's slipper!" I was too stunned by this strange and violent Humphrey to speak. Fortunately, at this moment Mischa stretched up to an oak beam, which no one else was tall enough to reach, and brought down the slipper. The lovers fled out by the back door as the front doorbell rang once again.

* * *

It was in New York in December of 1943 that I was to see Humphrey for the last time. I was dining at the restaurant '21' with Townsend Martin. Between the dinner and the supper hour, the bar was empty when Mayo and Humphrey

came in and stood briefly at our table to say hello and tell us that they were on their way to Africa to entertain the troops. I was shocked to see how dreadfully Humphrey's face had aged. The effects of the war he had waged against his inertia—work and whisky without sleep and food—were visible at last. Mayo looked as though she had just gotten out of bed with her clothes on. Her suit was rumpled, her hair not combed, her face not made up. They sat at a table in a far corner of the room as if they wanted to be alone, yet they neither spoke nor looked at each other till their drinks were brought to the table. Then Mayo turned to speak fiercely to Humphrey as if she were continuing some argument that could never be resolved. Slumped against the banquette, unmoved, he stared at his hand slowly turning his glass round and round on the table.

It was plain that the team of 'The Battling Bogarts' was soon to break up. He was Bogey now, his character firmly set, capable of battling alone. With the release of *Casablanca*, Humphrey Bogart had become big business. It was time for Lauren Bacall, who was primarily a business woman, to make her entrance. She, who was also to become his perfect screen partner, as seductive as Eve, as cool as the serpent.

My most vivid remembrance of the living Humphrey Bogart is of a night in New York at Tony's restaurant on Fifty-Second Street. I went in about one and sat at a table near Humphrey, who was sitting in a booth with Thomas Mitchell. It was a few weeks before *The Petrified Forest* would close in June, 1935, and Humphrey had nothing to look forward to except summer stock in Skowhegan, Maine. Presently Mitchell paid his bill and went out, leaving Humphrey alone drinking steadily with weary determination. His head drooped lower and lower. When I left he had fallen into his exhausted sleep with his head sunk in his arms on the table. "Poor Humphrey," I said to Tony, "he's finally licked."

My most vivid remembrance of the screen Humphrey Bogart is of a scene in his greatest film, *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*. He lies in the dirt, about to drag himself to the water hole. He has endured everything to get his gold—and now must he give it up? Wide open, the tragic eyes are raised to heaven in a terrible, beseeching look. "Despised and the most abject of men." In the agony of that beautiful face I see the face of my St. Bogart.

"THE TREASURE OF SIERRA MADRE".





Les DEMOISELLES de ROCHEFORT

Jacques Demy's new musical comedy,
about a nautical fête at Rochefort,
in the course of which everyone finds
the happiness he is looking for.
Music by Michel Legrand; colour
camerawork by Ghislain Cloquet;
sets by Bernard Evein.





Far left: Catherine Deneuve and Gene Kelly.
Left: Kelly and sailors, on the town in Rochefort.

Below left: Catherine Deneuve and Françoise Dorléac, the singing sisters of Rochefort.

Below: street scene. As for 'Parapluies de Cherbourg', paint-box colours and newly painted houses have transformed the town.



SC STATES & CINEMAS

a sight and sound enquiry

QUESTION	France	Italy	W. Germany
1. Is entertainment tax payable on cinema tickets? If so, at what rate?	Two different sets of taxes. A local tax, with a top limit of 8½%; also an entertainment tax whose rate can be raised by local authorities. In certain circumstances—mainly for cultural reasons—there are tax reductions.	Yes. The rate of tax depends on the price of the seat, ranging from 5% (cheapest seats) to 45%.	Yes. As a rule 10%; in the state of Hesse, 15% or 20%.
2. Is national production aided by a subsidy system? How is this financed?	There is an aid system, described below. Finance is secured, for the most part, by an additional charge on ticket prices which is not included in the total returns of box-office takings. The rest is made up by a tax on the release of films.	Yes. A producer whose film satisfies certain conditions is granted a contribution equal to 13% of the gross box-office takings for a period of five years from the film's first public screening. Also, under the auspices of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, there is a special fund for grants towards interest payment on loans for production finance.	Yes. Subsidies are granted directly by the Government.
3. Is the rate of subsidy related to the film's box-office earnings: that is, do the most commercially successful films also get the biggest grants?	Rate of aid is based on net box-office returns—at present running at a rate of about 13%. If a French film does well commercially in France, it benefits consequently by a higher level of subsidy.	Yes, as follows from the answer to question 2. There are also prizes for quality.	No.
4. Is there a quota system to protect national production?	Each cinema must show French quota films for 5 weeks out of 13.	Italian features must be allocated at least 25 days (including 3 Sundays) per quarter. To qualify for quota, films must be 'of the requisite technical standard, and of sufficient artistic, cultural and entertainment quality.' Exhibitors who show only Italian films get a rebate on tax.	No.

FOR THE FILM-MAKING COUNTRIES of Western Europe the problems are the same—only the scale varies. Audiences often in decline; home markets too small to sustain the native product; competition from American interests, with behind them the full resources of the American market; a high risk investment, at a time of rising costs, with only a long shot chance of a fair return.

Consequently, a pattern of subsidy and state aid stretches across Europe, varying in range, detail and intention from country to country. The common aim is to sustain production by giving the film-maker a larger share of the returns than the normal market processes would allow him. Beyond that, there are in most continental aid schemes some sort of built-in incentives to 'quality'—variations on aid exercised positively in favour of a certain kind of film-making. Some of these schemes involve rebates on entertainment tax, still a resented burden on many continental exhibitors. But such taxes usually have a local element, and it is hard to repeal them without giving local authorities an alternative way of raising money.

This chart does not pretend to deal in full detail with a very complex subject. We have left out of account the whole question of the Common Market, the efforts to bring national aid schemes into line, the wrestling with interpretations of the Treaty of Rome. When the time comes to debate a new British Cinematograph Films Act, our own Government may be considering variations in the British aid pattern. At any rate, the subject seems to be in the air; and we have tried to answer some basic questions.

Information has been supplied by Claude Degand of the Centre Nationale de la Cinématographie, Giulio Cesare Castello, Enno Patalas, Harry Schein of the Swedish Film Institute, Ib Monty, Juan Cobos, all of whom we thank.

Sweden	Denmark	Spain	United Kingdom
No, but a 10% levy on cinema admissions to finance aid schemes, etc.	No entertainments tax, but a 15% levy on cinema tickets.	Yes. 5% for education of children; 2% business traffic; 0.70% local tax.	No: entertainments tax was repealed in 1960. The Production Fund is financed by a levy on cinema admissions.
Yes. The money is advanced through the Swedish Film Institute, the scheme being financed by the 10% charge on admissions.	Yes. Aid at script stage, guarantees for production loans, and prizes. Financed out of the Film Fund, which is in turn financed by the 15% charge on tickets.	Yes. Subsidies to aid Spanish production are financed out of the dubbing rights paid for circulation of foreign films in Spanish versions (one million pesetas for an American feature).	Aid, though not direct subsidy. NFFC set up in 1949 to make available short-term finance for production. British Film Production Fund, which channels money directly to the producer, financed out of the statutory levy on admissions. Exhibitors pay the levy at an approximate rate of 7½% of their takings.
Less than half the total subsidy is related to the film's earnings at the box-office.	No.	Yes, at the rate of 15% of the film's box-office earnings. The Spanish Government also makes a production advance of one million pesetas.	Yes. Money is paid out from the Production Fund at a rate determined by the film's box-office takings.
No.	No.	One week of Spanish films for every three weeks of foreign films. Cinemas showing 'quality' films are allowed to count each day's screening as two days for quota purposes.	A minimum of 30% screen time for British first features.

QUESTION	France	Italy	W. Germany
5. Is there a system of prizes for 'quality'? If so, are the films chosen by a jury? What are some recent statistics for awards?	No system of 'quality' prizes for features. But, apart from the subsidies determined by box-office returns, a certain number of French films benefit annually from a system of advances on receipts. Films are selected either on the basis of scripts or on completion, and a committee makes recommendations to the Minister responsible for Cultural Affairs. The total sum available each year is approximately 9 million francs (about £650,000). There is no set limit on the number of films which can benefit.	Not more than 20 certificates a year, to films which have 'special artistic or cultural qualifications'. Each certificate qualifies a film for a prize of 40 million lire (£23,000), the producer getting 71% and the rest being shared between director, writer, cameraman, art director, etc. on an agreed percentage basis. Prizes are awarded by a committee made up of film critics and leading personalities in the arts. (System as now administered laid down by the new law dating from November 1965.)	The Federal Ministry of the Interior provides DM 4 million (about £360,000) annually for subsidies. Grants for features may be made at script stage, or after completion. The Federal Film Prize carries with it grants of DM 400,000, 350,000 and 300,000 although to date the DM 400,000 prize has not been awarded. Grants already made are deducted from these awards: for instance, in 1966 <i>Young Torless</i> received a 'Gold Ribbon' prize of DM 350,000; but only DM 150,000 was paid, since there had already been a script grant of DM 200,000. The Jury is nominated by the Minister of the Interior. (DM 100,000 = £9,000.)
6. Do these subsidy conditions relate to short films as well as features? Is there some special form of aid to short films?	A special aid system for commercial shorts. To qualify, films are shown to two selection committees, each acting as a court of appeal against the other (i.e., a film rejected by one committee is seen again by the second committee). Films selected may win 'quality' prizes: and to encourage programming of good shorts there are better aid terms for a feature coupled in a programme with a 'quality' short. There are also special allocations for films in colour. A special jury determines the prizes, which go to a maximum of 50 films a year.	A total of 30 prizes per quarter to short films, varying from 10 million lire to 5½ million. Prize rates also vary according to whether the film is a cartoon, in colour, or in black and white. Producers of approved shorts can demand free publicity and distribution from the Ente Automoto di Gestione per il Cinema. Exhibitors are obliged to show Italian shorts on at least 45 days each quarter, and can get tax relief for showing news-reels, etc.	Out of the DM 4 million mentioned in the last answer, between DM 500,000 and 1,000,000 goes to documentary and short films. The system is similar but there is no grant at script stage for shorts. Grants go up to DM 20,000 for shorts and DM 60,000 for long documentaries.
7. Is there any special scheme to encourage young film-makers? e.g. (a) a state supported film school; (b) some form of subsidy for experimental work; (c) aid to scripts, projects, etc.?	Apart from the system of advances on scripts already mentioned, there is no special encouragement for young directors. There are two official film schools, one responsible to the Ministry of Education and one to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.	The Centro Sperimentale is a film school backed by state finance. A special fund has been set up, under the auspices of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, to make grants 'to films of artistic and cultural purpose produced on a co-operative basis involving the sharing of costs by directors, authors, actors and technicians.'	Film schools were opened in 1966 at Berlin and Munich, but are not as yet functioning; there is a very active film course in the High School for Design in Ulm. Since 1965 the Association for Young Film-Makers has made available DM 350,000 for 'beginners' films (first or second long features), the maximum grant being half the production costs. The Association's contribution (which may be added to grants already received) is repayable out of box-office returns.
8. Is there any form of aid to (a) distributors, (b) cinema exhibitors to encourage the showing of 'quality' films?	No system of aid to distributors and, as the law stands at present, no aid to exhibitors. Aid to exhibitors was a feature of film legislation between 1948-1960, and the Government intends to revive it. <i>Cinemas d'art et d'essai</i> receive certain fiscal advantages.	Yes. An exhibitor who shows 'quality' films is entitled to a 25% tax rebate; a rebate of 50% is given to exhibitors who show films designated as specially suitable for children. It is intended to make special awards to exhibitors running <i>cinemas d'art et d'essai</i> , based on their general record over the year.	The States of the Federal Republic operate a system by which the usual tax is reduced for features certified as 'good' or 'very good' and for programmes containing approved shorts. In some States, tax is remitted entirely. (The difference between 'good' and 'very good' was once of real significance, but this is no longer the case.) Certificates are issued by a Film Entertainment Office, an institution of the States of the Federal Republic.
9. Is there any difficulty in entering the industry because of trade union restrictions? Do the unions lay down minimum standards (size of crews, etc.) which productions must observe; and if so are exceptions allowed?	There are Joint Agreements signed between the Technicians' and Producers' organisations.	No special difficulty in entering the industry. The law sets limits on employment of foreign workers, shooting outside studios, etc., subject always to exceptions on artistic grounds. Staff employed in film production must be registered with the special employment office for entertainment workers.	No.
10. What is the annual grant to the national Film Institute or Cinémathèque? Is this provided for by a tax on the industry or a direct government grant? Does the Institute/Cinémathèque: (a) run a cinema; (b) provide an information service; (c) issue publications; (d) engage in educational work; (e) run a distribution service; (f) administer state aid to the film industry?	The present aid structure includes financial assistance to the Cinémathèque Française. In future, it is proposed that the Cinémathèque will be financed by direct government grant, and not out of the funds for industry support. Primarily, the Cinémathèque functions as an Archive, with two cinemas for showing films.	The Cineteca Nazionale receives a government grant of not less than 50 million lire (£28,000). Basically an Archive, whose films are also shown for instructional purposes at the Centro Sperimentale, near which the Cineteca has its buildings. The Cineteca has arranged compilations of historical anthologies of Italian cinema. Does not engage in publication, the review <i>Bianco e Nero</i> and other books, etc. being published by the Centro Sperimentale.	The German Film Institute at Wiesbaden is supported by the film industry, with subsidies from the Federal Government, the State of Hesse and the town of Wiesbaden. The German Cinémathèque is maintained by the Federal Government. In practice, both function as Archives; neither has a cinema.

Sweden	Denmark	Spain	United Kingdom
<p>More than half the total aid takes the form of 'quality' awards. Films are chosen by a jury of seven, one of them the President of the Swedish Film Institute. The remaining six members are elected by the Board of the Film Institute, two being chosen each year to serve a three-year term. This system has been in existence for only two years: in the first year 8 films received awards; last year 13. The amount available for awards varies according to the income of the Swedish Film Institute. Currently it stands at about £340,000.</p>	<p>Yes. Films are chosen by the Film Board, made up of directors, scriptwriters, composers, actors, cameramen, critics. In 1965 a total of 1,275,000 Kroner (£66,000) was paid out in feature prizes (to 6 films), 225,000 Kroner to shorts (10 films), and 50,000 in personal prizes to directors, actors and technicians.</p>	<p>Quality prizes are awarded by a jury of critics, film historians, and one or two members from the Federation of Film Societies. Composition of the jury varies slightly each year. Among films recently awarded prizes are <i>La Caza</i>, <i>Con el Viento Solano</i>, <i>Juguete Rotos</i> and <i>De Cuerpo Presente</i>. Prizes to these films vary between some 4½ million and 2 million pesetas (roughly, £27,000 to £12,000) and can amount to as much as half of the film's production cost.</p>	<p>No quality prize system.</p>
<p>Yes: short films benefit from the general aid system.</p>	<p>Yes. See previous answer.</p>	<p>There are some annual prizes, but short films have very limited public circulation.</p>	<p>Short films are given special terms under the Production Fund rate of pay-out to producers. The main problem for British short film makers is to get their films screened commercially.</p>
<p>There is a film school operated by the Swedish Film Institute; also subsidies for experimental work and aid to scripts, etc.</p>	<p>A film school, financed by the Film Fund, began operation in September 1966, and there is a system of scholarships for young film-makers. Other forms of aid covered by the general scheme.</p>	<p>There is a state-supported film school and also a system of aid to scripts.</p>	<p>No national film school as yet, though the report of the committee set up by Miss Jennie Lee is expected to recommend one. Aid to experimental film production occasionally by way of NFFC backing; and on a modest scale by the BFI Production Board, in 1966 for the first time in receipt of government money for the purpose.</p>
<p>No special form of aid to distributors or exhibitors.</p>	<p>Distributors are among the recipients of 'quality' prizes (in 1965, they received 7 prizes to a total of £5,000). No form of aid to exhibitors, though cinemas can receive special loans for renovation.</p>	<p>There has been talk recently of cinemas <i>d'art et d'essai</i>, but because of the special censorship required for such a project no cinema of this kind is yet functioning. No form of aid to distributors or exhibitors.</p>	<p>No entertainment tax: therefore no tax rebates, or aid schemes.</p>
<p>No.</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Some difficulty in principle; less in practice. To become a director, an applicant must be approved by the Board of Film Directors.</p>	<p>Entry into professional film work requires union membership. There are agreements between unions and producers about working conditions, etc.; but in special cases (e.g., low-budget experimental film-making) these may be waived.</p>
<p>The Swedish Film Institute is wholly financed through the 10% charge on all box-office receipts of Swedish cinemas. It operates all the services described, including administering the official industry aid system.</p>	<p>The Danish Film Museum has an annual grant of one million kroner, the money coming from the Film Fund and being administered by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. It operates all the services with the exception of educational work, which is the responsibility of the Government Film Office, and (f) (administration of aid schemes).</p>		<p>The British Film Institute is financed by a direct government grant, for 1966/67 just over £230,000. It operates all the services, with the exception of (f): the Institute has nothing to do with the administration of industry aid.</p>

RAY AND TAGORE

Chidananda
Das Gupta

SOUMITRA CHATTERJEE IN "CHARULATA".

IT WAS NOT FOR NOTHING that Truffaut (reportedly) walked out of a showing of *Pather Panchali*; it was because he could not bear the slow rhythm. Arriving once in a rush to see *Postmaster*, I was irritated beyond measure by the time Anil Chatterjee took to turn his head less than 180 degrees. But, slowly, the film cast its spell; one was lifted out of the breathless pace of middle-class city life and placed in the heart of Indian reality, surrendering to the rhythm of life as it is lived by the majority of people, and has been, for hundreds of years. The waterlogged path, the little hut surrounded by bamboo groves, became real; every movement of a face took on meaning, became a personal experience.

Yet Satyajit Ray does not nostalgically idealise traditional India. The postmaster cannot stick life in the village and must go back; he is too city-bred. Apu moves from his village to Benares and finally to Calcutta, inexorably drawn towards a more modern world. *Jalsaghar* records the decay of feudalism, no matter with how much melancholy. *Devi* gently points to the protest against superstition naturally arising out of scientific education. And Amulya in *Samapti* sports a portrait of Napoleon and wears tartan socks and Oxford shoes—a wayward mixture of tradition and modernity.

In India, the hiatus between modern and traditional, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, is so great that this process of identification with the rhythm and reality of the life of the people is essential to any art which is not prepared to be ephemeral. The rhythm of Ray's films is one of the finest things about his work, for the very reason that it expresses a wider reality than the one we are used to in our islands of modernity in India.

It is also intimately bound up with the contemplative nature of his style, the preoccupation with what happens in the mind rather than on the surface. Ray's work abounds

in long wordless passages, in which his characters do very little and yet express a great deal. Think, for instance, of the long, slow opening shot of *Jalsaghar*, showing the old man sitting on the terrace in the twilight, his back to the camera, and his servant handing him his long pipe. It sets the note of the entire film—the passing of an order, the twilight not only of his own life, but of an age.

For those who look upon the cinema as a vehicle of action and drama, Ray's work is 'anti-film'. In the one sequence of *Jalsaghar* in which he essays a sudden spurt of dramatic action—the death by drowning of the old man's wife and son—he is acutely uncomfortable, and becomes almost banal both in the symbol of the upturned boat and the manner of introduction of the dead boy. In *Jalsaghar*, as in *Devi*, he takes a story with great 'dramatic' potential and persistently plays down this element. Perhaps he feels, like Auguste Renoir, that: "The hero portrayed at the moment when he is defying the enemy, or a woman shown in the hardest pains of labour, is not a suitable subject for a great painting, though men and women who have passed through such ordeals . . . become great subjects when later on the artist can portray them in repose. The artist's task is not to stress this or that instant in a human being's existence, but to make comprehensible the man in his entirety." (*Renoir, My Father*, by Jean Renoir.)

The inevitability and the direction of change is never in doubt in *Jalsaghar* or *Devi*; that is why Ray is content to express the individual in his entirety and never feels the need to take up the cudgels for social reform. In *Devi*, he has no less sympathy for the father-in-law who becomes obsessed with the idea that his son's wife is the incarnation of the goddess, than for the unfortunate girl who gives her life to it. To Ray both are victims: one of his superstition, the other of its consequences. There is no anger, no sense of urgency, and no obvious partisanship for the forces of change.

In this sense of resignation and fatality, Ray is Indian to the core. Indian tradition views existence as a continuous line of epic sweep rather than as a tight circle of drama in which death brings tragedy. The Apu trilogy is almost as littered

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with dead bodies as *Hamlet*, yet the feeling is totally different. Durga dies, followed by Harihar, and then Sarbajaya; finally Aparna. But life goes on, and hope never dies. The 'tragic view of life' of Western literature is totally absent from Ray.

* * *

In today's India hope is not just an eternal tradition: it underlies the here and now. A vast process of change has been developing for more than a hundred years through the influence of Western scientific thought. Until Independence, this was largely confined to the educated middle class; now that a faster tempo of industrialisation has set in, it has begun to spread more widely. The poorest or most sceptical Indian realises today that although material prosperity and the modern age are not just around the corner, India cannot remain in its present condition for ever. Perhaps in the past hope had something to do with the hereafter, or at most with the imminence of Independence; now it springs from the aspiration towards a better life in this world. Dialectically enough, the hope of material prosperity produces a sense of faith, and faith is an important element in art. Ray's work does not merely record the poverty of India: it is imbued with confidence in the human being.

The spiritual restlessness of a Bergman or a Fellini lies in the search for hopes and faiths which they cannot find. Inevitably, the difference in spirit gives rise to differences in form. The slow tempo of Ray's films reflects a deeper sense of Indian reality. In that respect, it is very different from the slow rhythm of an Antonioni film, which demands a response which is not 'natural' to the Western way of life, but rather runs counter to it and so creates bitter controversies. Ray's images are (like Antonioni's) what I would call musical in expressiveness: they send out ripples far beyond any conscious understanding of the elements contained in them. They are 'decorative', pronouncedly so in *Charulata*, but to varying degree in other films as well. This, too, is embedded in the Indian tradition, in which *décoratif* is not a word of abuse as it is in France. In Rajasthani miniatures or classical music, decoration and expression are one and the same thing. And the deliberation of Ray's composition does not inhibit the spontaneity of the work, which flows like Indian music, improvising freely within some very broad definitions. Even his background music often becomes memorable by itself, as in *Pather Panchali* and *Charulata*, and is not the 'unheard music' that background music in films is ideally supposed to be. The melodic themes are often recognisable and memorable, and emphasise the lyrical-decorative aspects of his films.

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In *Pather Panchali* Ray created his basic style and technique. It was not without its rough edges (think of the sequence of Durga's illness, with its element of theatrical contrivance), but the truth of inspiration carried it along. In *Aparajito*, his technique becomes more mature and polished and capable of subtlety. Less obvious emotions can now be expressed with more restraint (as in the death of Sarbajaya). In *Jalsaghar*, Ray made his first important film in a studio, with a professional actor and more complex resources. And *Jalsaghar* is the outstanding example of his technique until *Charulata*—in his handling of a vast set, mixing the real and the artificial. Significantly, it came out of the oldest and most primitive of Calcutta's studios. In the terrace scene of the opening, the moonlit veranda sequence, the music-room in session, the ride to death, every shade of atmosphere is subtly drawn out.

Mood and atmosphere dominate, and it is because of their dominance that craftsmanship plays such an important role. From here on, Ray is completely sure of himself and uses the camera almost with the fluency of a writer using his pen. To master technique and subordinate it completely to one's will is the first requirement for individual expression; and in the cinema it often becomes the supreme enemy, because of the enormous complexities and temptations. But Ray's unit (he works always with the same group of technicians) moves as easily under his hand as a well-ordered machine. Watching him shoot *Two Daughters*, what struck me was his sheer technical fluency.

It is not the perfection of technique, however, that makes Ray's films important. The world and mind he projects are basically those of the Bengal renaissance which started up in the 19th century. In a way he is a chronicler of the past; yet the inner assurance of hope and faith is not a thing of the past, for these feelings are buried under the surface of modern India, in the Nehru dream. Nehru stood somewhere between Gandhi and Tagore; and the truth of the Tagore value-world never quite lost its appeal in Nehru's India. In fact, it found new expression in the ideals, if not in all the realities, of the Nehru era.

The Calcutta of the burning trams, the communal riots, refugees, unemployment, rising prices and food shortages, does not exist in Ray's films. Although he lives in this city, there is no correspondence between him and the 'poetry of anguish' which has dominated Bengali literature for the last ten years. On the whole, Ray has portrayed the past evolution of the middle class as reflected in the long period dominated by Tagore. It is something that has gone into the making of himself and his generation; something he knows and understands. In a broad way, it forms the background of his experience. The experience need not be directly personal: the people, the customs, the attitudes reflected in the literature of the Tagore era become, through repetition and constant explication, part of the fabric of personal experience. A certain image of the villager, the young man getting to know the world outside, the women slowly liberated through social evolution, became crystallised in the poems, plays, novels and essays not only of Tagore but of writers of his period; and it is this image which projects itself in Ray's films. His characters are powerfully simplified, and contained within very broad outlines of the typology of the period.

* * *

Look at Ray's heroes. Soumitra Chatterjee's resemblance to the young Tagore in *The World of Apu* is far from accidental, for he reappears—without the beard—in film after film. And in the Apu trilogy Ray veers away from the novelist Bibhuti Bhushan's slightly dewy-eyed vision of 'Golden Bengal' to the Tagorean attitude of someone who is deeply attracted towards Western science and feels the urge to create a new Indian identity. Bibhuti Bhushan's wonder child never grows up; Ray's Apu lives through the experiences of childhood and youth to become a man.

In *Devi* we meet Soumitra Chatterjee again, by now already an embodiment of Bengali youth of a certain period and type both of which are distinctly derived from Tagore. Already in *Devi* the weakness of the character has become apparent: he is a thinker more than a man of action, a bit of a Hamlet. He has read Mill and Bentham and disapproves of his father's superstitious visions, but he is not strong enough to withstand the pressures of tradition or repudiate what he considers to be the evils of ignorance. In his political thinking Tagore eschewed both the violence of the terrorist and the shrewdly practical non-violence of Gandhi; but he provided inspiration towards the general ideals of patriotism which is not narrow, individualism which is not intolerant. Ray's heroes also represent a noble philosophical outlook, but are not men of action on the plane of reality.

By the time of *Charulata*, Soumitra Chatterjee has evolved further from his earlier, Tagorean base. The Mill and Bentham-reading character (inspired by Ram Mohun Roy, a 19th century social reformer often described as the 'father of modern India') now belongs to the older generation, and is embodied in the bearded, pincenez-sporting Bhupati with his affluent idealism. Amal (Chatterjee) himself stands between the pure Tagore and what is to come after. But he too is devoid of cynicism, on the whole unselfconscious, and capable of moral action, in going away when he realises that he is about to betray his brother. Of what is to come after, we see rather more in *Kapurush*: the 'Ravindrik' (Tagorean) generation has finally revealed its failure in the weak-minded, slightly parasitic intellectual (a film writer), who is no longer made a coward by his conscience but by sheer lack of courage.

In the series of films—the trilogy, *Devi*, *Samapti*, *Charulata* and *Kapurush*—the Ray hero has emerged in a straight line

from the Tagore mould of protected innocence into the contemporary world, only to find himself inadequate to contend with it. The type of hero represented by Soumitra Chatterjee in various Ray films is no longer noble in his motives and irresolute in his actions: in *Kapurush* he is weak without being noble. But this is an end which is surely not untypical of the romantic Bengali youth brought up under the Tagore umbrella. They have become cynical under the pressures of disillusionment in independent India. Their past idealism has become a drag on them and has made them unable to cope with a society where, whether we like it or not, the law of the jungle has acquired some currency. But even this evolution never takes the hero entirely outside the Tagore value world; it only takes him to its furthest limits, limits which Tagore himself had explored.

Even through the working class garb of *Abhijan*, the Tagore-oriented middle class minds of Ray and Chatterjee show clearly through the thin disguise of the different-style beard of its hero. Soumitra has tried in many ways to play 'tough' not only in this film but in others; but he has not ceased to represent the charm, innocence, unselfconsciousness and the accompanying weakness of the young Bengali romantic hero of the Tagore period. A sort of protected hero, with a dominating father-figure lurking somewhere in the shadows, who is not destined to battle on his own, still less to win.

In *Kanchenjunga*, the hero comes from an altogether new social class, and his line of thought is different from that of the Tagorean dreamers. He is a product of today, with an idealism that is more capable of contending with realities, because it is more clear-eyed and much more of a piece. He is not the affluent son turned idealist: he belongs more to the larger middle classes which ceased to be landlords long ago. He is not in the least ashamed of his comical uncle, would call a spade a spade any day, and even if he is attracted to the daughter of the impossible Ray Bahadur (a low-grade British title), he sets no great store by her vague promise of seeing him in Calcutta. If the liaison did not work out, he would have no hesitation in breaking it. But this different hero is only hinted at in the splendid isolation of the picture's Darjeeling setting, and this lightweight film obliquely bypasses a set of values unfamiliar to the Tagore mythology.

Another modern type, less of a hero, is presented by Anil Chatterjee in *Postmaster* and *Mahanagar*. But in both films the basic emphasis is away from him; in one on the child, in the other the woman. As a result he is a somewhat shadowy figure, brought in to fill the place of the traditional none-too-bright middle-class individual. He has acquired the outward mental accoutrements of the Tagore world, to the extent of wanting to teach the child in *Postmaster* and counselling the wife to take a job in *Mahanagar*, without any sense of dedication to either. His relationships, his emotions, never reach the larger-than-life size achieved by other Ray heroes, especially Soumitra Chatterjee, in their representation of an epoch or an outlook.

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One could say that in the films preceding *Mahanagar*, Ray's preoccupation is with man. The trilogy's heroines are the women of Indian tradition, loving and sometimes loved, providers of anchorage to the nomadic male who goes out to do battle and whose fate is therefore of greater importance. The girl in *Devi* is not much more than an object, owned by her father-in-law even more than by her husband; even Sarbajaya, patient and loving in a mother-earth way, cannot decide either her own or her family's future. In *Postmaster*, the child is a little mother, already burdened with the responsibilities of an outgoing love. In *Samapti*, although the husband is a somewhat 'enlightened' young man, the measure of self-determination which the wife is destined to enjoy does not seem to be too great. The film does record a change in the outlook towards marriage, but more from the man's point of view than from that of the girl, who accepts, with happiness, what all others have accepted before her.

It is in *Mahanagar* that, for the first time, we come across a woman who is awakened to the possibility of determining the

course of her own life. Typically enough, the awakening touch comes from the husband, for men have been traditional liberators of women. But traditionally, too, they have retracted when they have seen the consequences of their action. Arati is unable to exert herself in her brief freedom, but she has had a glimpse of a world where she is somebody in her own right. When she resigns from her job—her one act of protest—it is in obedience not to her husband's wish, but to her own impulsive fellow-feeling for the Anglo-Indian girl who is unjustly dismissed. Ironically enough, in this act she also gives up the freedom she has won. Somebody, protesting against this thesis, said that "as for her rights, Arati is perverted." So she is; the adjustment to a sudden inner feeling of economic independence is not easy. It comes out in little awkward ways which add to the truth of the situation.

But I find Ray's first essay on the Indian woman tentative and unsure of itself. The characters are not seen sufficiently from the inside, and there is an excessive dependence (itself uncharacteristic of Ray) on outward incident. The meeting under the doorway, when the husband says "Do not worry, it is a vast city and one of us is bound to find a job," provides too pat a solution for a problem which will continue to plague us for a long time to come. And it is unlike Ray to seek such four-square solutions: his films are much better when they are what people call open-ended.

The sureness of touch is much more evident in *Charulata*, and because Ray's understanding of the character is perfect, everything falls into place. *Charulata* is observed entirely from the inside—obsessively so, in fact, with the result that we do not see into the minds of the men. Except when he breaks down in the carriage, Bhupati is more of a type than a character—the agreeable 'young Bengal' liberal of the 19th century, affluent, idealistic, touching in his innocence and lack of self-consciousness. Amal, too, reveals himself only in the scene in the press room after the robbery, where, standing in the half-light behind his brother, he awakens to the truth of his situation. His inner conflict elsewhere is so muted as to be missed almost completely by many people.

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But where *Charulata* herself is concerned, every thought in her mind is clearly visible. In Madhabi Mukherjee, Ray found the embodiment of a certain type of Indian woman, just as he had found the man in Soumitra Chatterjee. Deeply intelligent, sensitive, outwardly graceful and serene, inwardly she is the kind of traditional Indian woman of today whose inner seismograph catches the vibration waves reaching from outside into her seclusion. The world outside is changing, and down in the drawing-room English 19th century social philosophy and Ram Mohun Roy ideas are inevitably working towards the liberation of women.

Mahanagar is a contemporary story, and *Charulata* a period-piece. Yet in the latter, the woman is more self-aware, and one might even call her ruthless. If her conscience does not trouble her too much, it is not merely because of her innocence; she has a strong character, she finds out what she wants, and the knowledge does not shock her. It only makes her go forward to get her man. She reminds me, perversely, of Lady Macbeth in Wajda's Siberian film. In a society which tells a woman 'here is the man that thou shalt love,' she does not shy away from an impossible relationship. And, I repeat, this is only partly due to the innocent nature of her self-awareness. It does come to her so slowly that it is hard for her to draw the line; but in that unforgettable garden scene she perceives the dark truth, without a shadow of doubt. A 'transparent' moment, and a great one at that.

I see in *Kapurush*, irrespective of the fact that it is a somewhat sloppily made film by Ray's and *Charulata*'s standards, a continuation of the theme of the woman's quest for happiness of her own making. She is the same character, as self-possessed and serene as ever; but she has herself changed, through her previous experiences, as it were, in *Mahanagar* and *Charulata*. She tasted economic independence in the first, and wanted it; in the second she found the man she loved, and longed for the right to go on loving him. In *Kapurush* she is the woman who has lost both. She is married



TOP: MADHABI MUKHERJEE IN "MAHANAGAR".
LEFT: THE DECAYING FEUDAL SPLENDOURS OF "JALSAGHAR".
ABOVE: THE WIFE AND THE YOUNG WRITER IN "KAPURUSH".

to a vapid tea-planter whom she has never loved; she stays married to him because that is the only way for a woman. She is almost in the same state of suspended animation as she was at the end of *Charulata*. And suddenly, to disturb her peace, her earlier love reappears on the scene. She knows already, unreasonably, that he failed once to take her away; and she knows that he will fail again—this time not out of any noble sentiment for a brother, but out of inability to defy society. Again her character is more eloquent in its silences than are the others in their long speeches. Again, the director's mind is concentrated on the woman's side of the triangle. *Kapurush* is thus a weaker re-statement of the same proposition, and its importance lies only in the continuity of the theme and the sense of finality which it brings to it.

With increased freedom for the woman, the system of marriage has proved inadequate, and in Western society shows signs of cracking up. Whether that is a good thing or not, let the social philosophers work out. But the inescapable fact is that such pressures are beginning to be felt in our country, with the progress in women's education and economic independence. It may well be that Ray never thought consciously of such a continuity. All the same it is clearly discernible, in spite of the fact that the films were not conceived in a neat time-sequence.

* * *

It is typical of Ray that the most contemporary and truest statement of the theme should be achieved in the exquisite period piece rather than in the modern setting. In the first place, contemporaneity is not something that belongs to the story of a film, but to the outlook the director brings to bear on it. Ray's contemplative, lyrical style is symptomatic of a remoteness from the immediate problems of the day. And if he had not been able to stand back and look at what has happened in our country in the last hundred years, he could not have made the trilogy, or projected so completely the Tagore era, the 19th century Bengal renaissance, and taken in even the fringe of the post-Tagore period.

DIRECTOR AS COMPOSER. RAY WITH JAMES IVORY, FOR WHOSE "SHAKESPEARE WALLAH" HE WROTE THE MUSIC.



Where Ray's apprehension of character tends to fall down is in dealing with characters (the capitalist of *Jalsaghar*, the tea-planter of *Kapurush*) more or less unfamiliar to the typology of the Tagore era. Its idealism often underplayed unpleasant truths of character and the contradictory urges inevitable in human beings. Biographies of this period, for instance, never bring out the man in his total psychology; they select the more pleasant, publicly displayable traits. Tagore himself never reveals his personal life in the way of Gandhi. Gandhi's outlook was not contained within the framework of the rise of the middle class in India; Tagore's was. At its best, the Tagore trend resulted in the emergence of noble images of character; at its worst, it was hypocritical, a little puritan, a little afraid of Freud. It was never suited to the depiction of life in the raw. The furthest that it goes in revealing human weakness is the delicate and forgiving treatment of it in *Charulata*.

Neither the more violent and ugly aspects of our society, nor the 'poetry of anguish' generated by the struggle of the Tagoreans to cope with them, are reflected in Ray's films. In fact, whenever he has taken a tentative step towards them, he has tended to burn his fingers. Take *Abhijan*, for instance: the attempt to enter the underworld of the working class results in total failure. And the reason for this failure is that it cannot be drawn from the myths and types of the Tagore world. One is not surprised to hear that the film was originally to have been made by someone else from a script by Ray, until at the last moment he decided to take it on. Even the atmosphere of the office in which Arati works in *Mahanagar* is just not complex enough. It never exudes quite the dankness, the monumental indifference, the cynicism and self-seeking, which make up the fabric of such inelegant reality. It is strenuously woven, and the clear-cut characters in the office situation carry no suggestion of unseen depths.

Here the powerful simplifications of Ray's earlier films tend towards over-simplification. In other words, he fails to enter the post-Tagore world, in which the young idealist has either turned cynical, or has turned away from patriotism, politics and social reform because all this proves too dirty for him and makes him take refuge in the 'poetry of anguish'. It is a moot question whether the later generation brought up on Tagore in the pre-Independence era of hope was toughened enough in its training to cope with the pressures of disillusion, greed, corruption and ruthlessness released in the post-Independence era. Even the rural scene today has changed, and the typology of the past no longer fits. The image of village life conjured up for so long by literary habits has at last become untrue. New types are being created by the incursion of planned investment into the countryside, the invasion of the radio, the Block Development Offices, family planning drives, the commercial cinema, the money generated by soaring food prices, the opening up of communications. The old myths are no longer adequate: they provide a rich background to the middle-class mind, but the need to translate these values into a tougher outlook and language has become painfully clear.

The post-Tagore age has finally caught up with us. It is an age that might call for a passionate involvement on the part of the artist, and the film is an art which, willy-nilly, must in some way reflect these changes in social reality. Whether Ray will enter into another phase of development to do so, or new artists will arise out of these new and less serene urges of the times, it is impossible to say. Or will the most significant expression of intellect and sensibility—which in the years of Ray in Bengal has been the domain of the cinema—move to another medium? In his documentary biography about Tagore, Ray does for the man what his films as a whole do for the Tagore age: accept a value-world created by another, and proceed to illuminate it brilliantly, to project and extend it in terms of the cinema.

Sons of Kafka



VERA CHYTILOVA'S "THE DAISIES".

Claire Clouzot

SO MUCH HAS BEEN written about Czech cinema, so many festivals throughout the world have shown Czech films, that it is high time to attempt an assessment. France's critics are raving about Forman's two features and applauding Jan Nemec, London welcomes Juracek and Ivan Passer to its Festival. In short, in fashion or passion, Czechoslovakia is on everyone's lips. After 31 awards collected since 1962 from San Sebastian to Mannheim, from Moscow to Mar del Plata, what are some of its most promising directors doing at present, and what is it that distinguishes their work?

* * *

In November 1964, Jaromil Jires wrote about *Little Pearls from the Bottom*: "We are six directors. We are all very different. We have in common certain conceptions of life and of our work. Hence our unanimity on Bohumil Hrabal [the writer on whose stories the film was based]. But I'm convinced

that each of us interprets him in a slightly different way. To preserve our freedom while shooting, none of us saw the other sketches; we wanted the film, in its final state, to be a surprise to us too. We take the risk of disparity rather than impose a predetermined unity which would lead to compromise." He did not need to worry, for the unity summed up in *Little Pearls* has probably no equivalent elsewhere.

This sample-film is something quite unusual in the history of a country's film production. It offers a concentrated introduction to Czech cinema—the new one, that is, developed since 1962. For it should be pointed out that we are dealing with a rebirth rather than a birth. If, in contrast to a decade ago, we find in the centralised studios of Barrandov, ten directors in their thirties, three in their forties, and only one director of 55 (the indestructible Otakar Wavra), it means new blood has been pumped into the old 'body cinematographic'*. The current revival does not stem from the period of 'socialist realism' which followed post-war nationalisation; it is the result of the freedom brought about by a man called Vojtech Jasny who, in 1957, produced the influential *September Nights*.

Jasny still shoots films, of course, as do men of the older generation, such as Jiri Weiss, Jan Kadar, Elmar Klos, or those of Jasny's own age: Karel Kachyna, Zbynek Brynych. But the constellation of new talents grown in the fertile ground of the F.A.M.U. (School of Cinematography of Prague) includes all the names that figure on the credits of *Little Pearls from the Bottom*; names likely to grow in stature and reputation.

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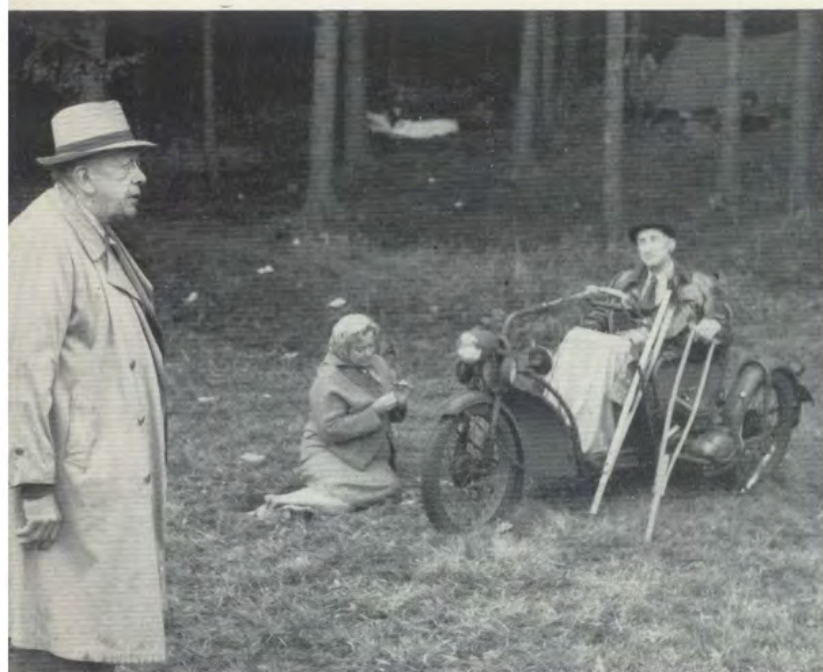
Composed of six sketches adapted from short stories by Hrabal, who both supervised the film and played a small part in it, *Little Pearls* is signed by Jiri Menzel (aged 30), Jan Nemec (30), Evald Schorm (35), Vera Chytilova (37), Ivan Passer (33) and Jaromil Jires (31). If one adds the names of the cameraman, the famous Jaroslav Kucera, who shot all six sketches, and the two composers, Jan Klusak and Jiri Sust, the team of this generation of Czech film-makers is almost complete.

Significantly, they chose to group themselves around one author and to work by way of sketches. Yet it surprisingly turns out that the choice of this form was not a conscious one. Jan Nemec told me: "If an artist conceives a work in one specific form, he must do it in that form and it is up to you to explain why." Indeed, the widespread use of the sketch form by Czech film-makers deserves analysis. Following the example of writers like Milan Kundera, Hrabal and Kafka who use the short story, the literary version of the sketch, movie-makers find in that underrated film genre a means of saying something quickly, forcefully, and also elliptically.

For the critic, the *Little Pearls* are jewels: the trends it reveals persist from sketch to sketch, and through its directors' other work. First and foremost, there is that mixture of realism and fantasy which may almost be considered the Czech trademark. A realism different from the Italian neo-realism, depicted through impressionistic touches rather than heavy brush-strokes, close to banality, but a poetic banality if you will. And reality rather than realism: plain daily reality, no matter how insignificant it may seem, or chosen perhaps because it *is* insignificant. A reality seen often through the eyes of adolescents, apprentices, beginners, young girls searching for their identity. Hence the recurring atmosphere of dance-hall, student restaurant or snackbar, military barracks. Czech directors rather turn their backs on the past: they are not like the Poles in cultivating a war nostalgia. The Czech cinema is written in the present tense.

Intertwined with this realism, another dimension appears: the element of the fantastic *à la* Kafka, the result of a gift for dream transformation and of a genuine despair. For with the view of everyday life *as it is*, comes the discovery of its labyrinth aspect. The name of Kafka is openly referred to—in, for instance, Schorm's *Every Day Courage*, which ends with

* The Czech cinema is, in fact, one of the oldest in the world. The first films were produced in 1898, the industry developed around 1918, and just before World War II the rate of production was about 30 films a year.



TWO OF THE SKETCHES IN "LITTLE PEARLS". LEFT: MENZEL'S "DEATH OF MR. BALTHAZAR". RIGHT: PASSER'S "INSIDIOUS AFTERNOON".

the phrase "The man who, in the midst of his doubts, perceives a ray of hope, will not say 'I have lost'"; in the entire visual mood of Schmidt and Juracek's *Joseph Kilian*, or in Jan Nemec's cherished project of adapting *The Metamorphosis*. In the course of a conversation at Karlovy Vary, Jan Kadar told me: "We are all influenced by Kafka, we are all his sons..."

Yet the Czech film-makers are far from being a group of victims, and their intellectual and formal rebellion, quite remarkable in a Socialist Republic, is a very lucid one and results in films which are, first and foremost, a comment on society. Vera Chytilova, Evald Schorm and Jan Nemec are, in this respect, the champions of social attack. A special kind of attack, let us hasten to add, tempered by something called Czech humour which causes the colour (except in Nemec's work) to remain grey. Czech humour expresses itself essentially in shades. The mood is bitter-sweet, the feeling behind the laugh is melancholy. Forman's *Peter and Pavla*, Passer's *Intimate Lighting*, Chytilova's *Daisies* make us laugh continually. Yet we realise that the smile, given the disenchanted feelings it hides, should freeze on our lips.

Fantastic realism, humour... it is always preposterous to pin labels to individuals. Yet the term 'fantastic realism' helps us characterise all of Nemec's work: *Diamonds of the Night* is fantastic and authentically realistic, as is Hynek Bocan's *Nobody Will Laugh*. To be sure, in the Czech cinema, these qualities are not literary but always visual. Consequently the contribution of cameramen is of capital importance and would deserve a separate study.

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In *Little Pearls*, our sample film, 'fantastic realism' is certainly the common denominator of all the scripts. What varies from sketch to sketch is the mood (visual and intellectual) created by the six directors.

Jiri Menzel's sketch 'The Death of Mr. Balthazar' was its director's first film. Scene: the Brno motorcycle race, viewed distinctly by the camera and interpreted by four eccentric people—a veteran car fan, his wife who raves about racers' accidents, a neighbour obsessed by irrelevant memories, and an invalid who delights in telling about the loss of his artificial leg. Menzel places his four bizarre characters against the 'real' background of the crowd with its morbid voyeurism, and suddenly introduces the race itself in slight slow motion to the music of an idyllic waltz, a prelude to the abrupt death of 'Mr. Balthazar'.

Previously, Menzel had played small roles in films such as

Jan Kadar's *The Accused*. He has since done another sketch for a thriller called *Crime at the Girls' School*, and has just finished his first major feature, based on another Hrabal short story and called *Special Priority Trains*. Set in a little railway station in Bohemia just before the end of the war, it sets up a confrontation between the station-master and young Milos, a sex maniac. According to Menzel himself, it is "a confrontation of obscenity and tragedy. Joy, fright, desire are laid bare by war conditions. For Milos, it is his first contact with real life, a clash between the comic and the tragic which will lead to his death." And he adds: "It is quite presumptuous to try to render on the screen the distortion of reality so characteristic of Hrabal." But he proved in 'The Death of Mr. Balthazar' that this was precisely his strong point.

By comparison with Jiri Menzel, Evald Schorm's sketch 'The House of Joy' is almost cheerful. An exception to the Czech rule which keeps a documentary film-maker in his field, Schorm made several shorts while teaching at the F.A.M.U. As his first full-length picture, *Every Day Courage*, confirms, he is of the 'thirties' group, the one who carries his rage and his despair nearest to the limit of what the spectator can bear. However, his sketch in *Little Pearls*, the only one in colour, starts like a documentary about a naive painter who covers the walls of his house with the products of his wild imagination. Then, by juxtaposing two ordinary insurance salesmen who drop in on him to sell a policy, Schorm adds a fantastic dimension to the documentary: the artist, a madman, becomes normal, the two dull visitors turn into Martian scarecrows.* Since 'The House of Joy', Schorm has returned to making shorts: a poetic film entitled *Psalm*, and a documentary shot in Athens, *Legacy*.

Vera Chytilova's sketch 'At the World Cafeteria' was her strongest film prior to the long-awaited *The Daisies* (1966); yet it was poorly received by Czech critics, perhaps because it was less frankly baroque. Be that as it may, Vera, by age the dean of the group, and married to the great cameraman Jaroslav Kucera, has made her mark by her brilliance, intellectual femininity and sharpness of observation, somewhat in the style of a Czech Agnès Varda. Perhaps she has hardened along the years: earlier films have a tenderness and warmth à la Forman which, in *Little Pearls*, has turned to a mood of hopelessness and alienation, expressed through a style rather arbitrarily baroque. In the cafeteria two events

* Rather the same thing happens in *Every Day Courage*, where a political and sentimental crisis drives the hero, Jaroslav Lukas, to an extreme of delirium quite disproportionate to its cause.

happen simultaneously: the suicide of a waitress and a wedding banquet. Enter a man playing his own role: Boudnik, a workman who has gained fame as an abstract engraver. The final baroque scene shows Boudnik and the bride whirling endlessly around trees during a rainstorm, as the worker-engraver tears the wedding dress off the girl to reveal her bare bosom—all this in decomposed slow motion!

The Daisies opens a new path in Chytilova's career. She wrote the original scenario with Esther Krumbachova: it is the satirical story of Maria I and Maria II (played by non-professionals Ivana Karhanova and Jidka Cerhova), two young scatterbrains, bored and eager for attention, who play tricks on men but actually trick themselves in the process. Chytilova wants to stigmatise a superficiality which can go as far as simulating death: she does not deal in psychological realities, but by exaggerating their defects she shows that the Marias live as parasites, deceiving others but ultimately more deceived themselves. And in this surrealistic modern farce, these extravagant and atypical girls are unwitting heroines of a philosophical tale. Vera prefers to call it "a philosophical documentary take-off." Sarcasm, satire . . . we stay in the tradition of fantastic realism.

The same holds true of Nemec's *Pearls* sketch 'The Liars'. But Nemec is completely pitiless. A very calm and meticulous man when you talk to him, Nemec presents in this sketch two emaciated grandfathers who, in their hospital beds, tell each other imaginary yarns of past glories. They were so old that one of these non-professional actors died before the editing was completed. The lack of pity, of course, does not reside in the choice of actors, but in the fact that to display these ruins of men Nemec had Kucera take shots from underneath, so revealing the hollow aspects of a dead-alive body.

Nemec is as cruel in *A Report on the Party and the Guests* (see Autumn, 1966 SIGHT AND SOUND), but much more refined since the Kafkaesque content is enveloped by great visual beauty. The film is still banned by Czech censorship, but already its author is completing *The Martyrs of Love*. What I saw of this film (two reels on the moviola) in the cutting rooms at Barrandov, is an exact application of the *hommage* Nemec wanted to pay his pre-war idols: Sternberg and Chaplin. The film consists of three sketches, played as usual by non-professionals, and with links described by Nemec as "not logical, but evident." In the scenes I saw, a bowler-hatted young man wanders sadly through nightclubs and dance-halls searching for women. When he finally finds two and takes them home to drink and dance, he undresses one of them, his friend the other. Envious, impotent, he watches the other couple on the next bed, inextricably tied up under the sheets. Nemec was smilingly watching this scene while confessing his clear intention to parody the *A Bout de Souffle* bed scene. Pitiless is the shabby charcoal black of the photography, pitiless the absence of dialogue, the spoken words being reduced to a total of four phrases. A grotesque but nostalgic reverie, *The Martyrs of Love* promises to be as individual a film as *A Report on the Party*.

Having been denied the copyright of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* by the Brod family, Nemec is now working on three projects: *Wet Snow*, after Dostoevski; an adaptation of the 12th century French legend about the Chevalier Lanval, in the form of a stylised fairy-tale; and *The Four-Leaf Clover*, which he describes as "a crazy film combining the atmospheres of Hieronymus Bosch and American crazy comedy . . ." All these films will probably be under way sooner than we think, for Nemec is a man of decision, organisation, and admirable artistic stubbornness.

Purposely put at the end of the release version of *Little Pearls* for the 'ray of hope' it brings the spectator, Jaromil Jires' 'Romance' uses to perfection that impressionistic mosaic of feelings which was both the strength and weakness of his *The Cry*. Ivan Vyskocyl, the gifted young actor of the first part of *Every Young Man*, plays a plumber who meets a vivacious gypsy girl in the street. What follows her blunt demand for money and the offering of her body is the subject of the sketch. Shyness, retreat, bluntness, overtures of all sorts misinterpreted by each, turn the film into a study of the first stages of love. At the end of the sketch, with the camera panning

around the gypsy camp, the tattooed bodies of families sleeping in the open, Jires suggests a poetic dimension so far untouched by either Forman or Passer.

Jires has since tackled a more tragic theme—unhappily, without success. He had prepared with Pavel Juracek the script of *Bitter Almonds*, a story of the selection of young Czech women for the human breeding-stables established by the Nazis. But the script was rejected by the censors, and Jaromil Jires does not yet know what the subject of his next film will be.

* * *

Although the Production Group cut it from the release version of *Little Pearls*, Ivan Passer's 'Inspired Afternoon' is a part of the manifesto. It was conceived in the same spirit as the others; yet the 20-minute 'Inspired Afternoon' is the most realistic (not to say the least fantastic) of the six sketches. It is important because it was Passer's first production as a filmmaker outside the Forman orbit, a preface to his *Intimate Lighting*. Still in the disenchanted style of Hrabal, its story of a young man sitting waiting and reading in the corner of a tavern, while people around wonder what he is doing, has a touch of Chekhov. The atmosphere is down to earth: card-playing fanatics; talk about football. It is by contrast that the young man's wait looks odd.

Intimate Lighting has since suggested that Passer is not a real realist; for by showing the grandmother practising calisthenics on the ironing-board, recalling her past circus days, Passer was adding a drop of strangeness at the least expected moment. The same holds true of the last sequence, the freezing of the shot with the characters trying to drink a solidified egg-nog which might never run down their throats, leaving us on a final question-mark as though we were viewing fossilised Pompeiians. Passer, who has collaborated on the scenarios of Forman's three films, is now working with him again on a film at present titled *Careful, Baby!* It will take place during preparations for a dance in a mountain holiday centre run by a trade union for its members.

By January, 1965, the six Czech directors already felt their sketch film belonged to the past. They were eager for new work. Since then, Carlo Ponti has visited Barrandov and signed up Milos Forman. Miroslav Ondricek has done the photography for Lindsay Anderson's *The White Bus*, the latter having translated the subtitles for Jan Kadar's *Shop on the High Street*, which, in turn, won a Hollywood Oscar for the best foreign film . . . The internationalisation of the Czech cinema is well on its way. So far, Czech integrity has been preserved in spite of big money offers, snob appeal (like the Forman cult in France) and other temptations. Whatever the future may hold, it is the Czechs at the moment who are pumping new blood into the arteries of European cinema.

JAN NEMEC'S "THE MARTYRS OF LOVE".





Philip French

DORE SCHARY: "I want to tell the audience the narration is from the book. A lot of people don't know this is a book. I want to be blunt with them. Put them in a more receptive mood. I want to tell them they're gonna see a *classic*, a *great novel*."—Quoted by Lillian Ross in PICTURE.

HOLLYWOOD HAS NOT ON the whole set out to woo the reading public. As an industry it was established to provide entertainment for the semi-literate urban masses. To buy a book in Hollywood meant to acquire the film rights, at which point it became a 'property' presenting problems that had to be 'licked'. When studios hired writers they were generally reduced to lowly regarded (if highly paid) cogs in the production machine. Within movies themselves a bespectacled book-lover was traditionally a person without a Saturday date, lonely and frustrated—eventually either to be left in the lurch or to throw away book and glasses for more rewarding pursuits such as making love or money. If, as Dorothy Parker said, men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses, women rarely gave second looks to men who read books. Not that books were totally disregarded—merely

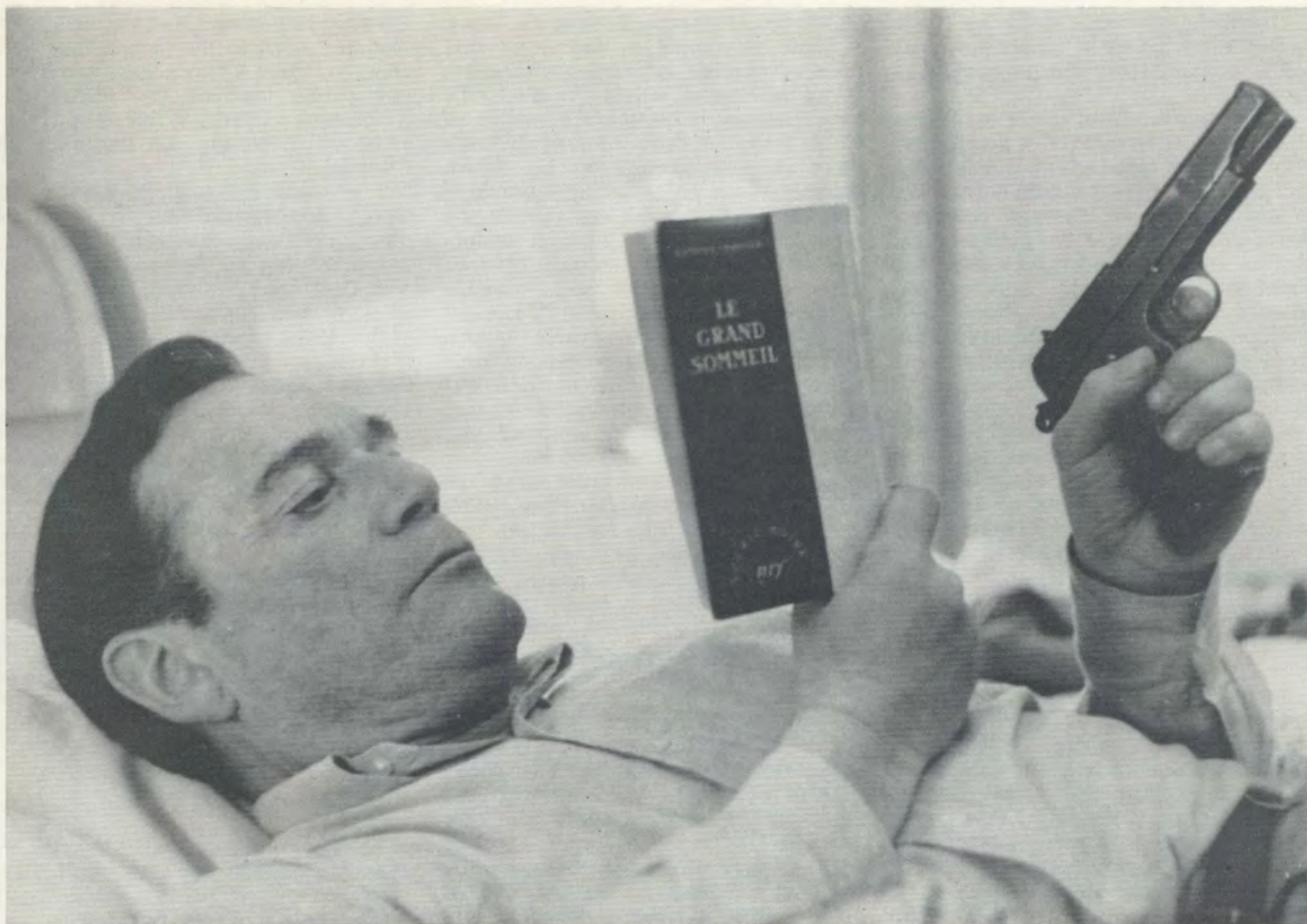
that they belonged in anonymous leather bindings on the shelves of the rich. Only a few licensed eccentrics, like Leslie Howard, were allowed to take them down.

In a vague sort of way books were respected for their prestige (as authors were before they signed studio contracts) provided they didn't have to be read. "I would rather take a fifty-mile hike than crawl my way through a book," wrote Jack L. Warner in his autobiography. This ambivalence is caught in William Inge's play *Picnic*, when the footloose Hal is 'impressed' (stage direction) by the pathetic younger sister having read "a *whole* book in an afternoon," and says: "I wish I had more time to read books. That's what I'm going to do when I settle down. I'm gonna read all the better books—and listen to all the better music. A man owes it to himself." The part of Hal in the film was of course taken by William Holden, who a few years before had played the embittered writer in *Sunset Boulevard* and, as the intellectual journalist in *Born Yesterday*, had donned horn-rimmed spectacles to give Judy Holliday a crash course in civics.

This nexus of attitudes has by no means been confined to Hollywood; on the contrary it is a reflection of the working assumptions of those function-

ing in the mass media throughout the world. Currently, however, European films are full of references to other arts, to books, paintings, plays, and music. Some are significant and personal, others merely modish—or meaningless. This tendency is a product of many factors: the general drift of our culture; the kind of people who make films; the strata of society with which movies now deal and toward which they are directed; the decline in straight narrative cinema and the consequent emphasis upon individual rather than generalised décor; the growing acceptance by audiences of the unexplained and the elliptical.

One cannot point to a particular date when this tendency first began to show itself, but in retrospect and in view of their subsequent influence the appearance of both *Breathless* and *L'Avventura* in 1960 is worth noting. In the former Godard includes a specific, if rather tangential, discussion of Faulkner's *The Wild Palms*, the events and themes of which have much in common with his film. This was but one among many references to literature, music, art, and other movies. *Breathless* was the beginning of a sort of personal culture-collage that has tended to preoccupy Godard and, especially in *Une Femme Mariée* and *Pierrot le Fou*, even to form the infrastructure of his movies.



HABITS IN READING. LEFT: BETTE DAVIS ON THE FRONT PORCH IN "THE PETRIFIED FOREST". ABOVE: LEMMY CAUTION MEETS RAYMOND CHANDLER IN "ALPHAVILLE".

In *L'Avventura*, Antonioni also referred to an American novel. But its function in the film can be more easily isolated. It is when a copy of *Tender is the Night* is discovered along with the Bible in the luggage of the missing Anna. Naturally her father seizes upon the Bible as an indication that she has not committed suicide. The audience however has been made aware of his lack of understanding of her situation, and Fitzgerald's novel is surely a clue to the state of Anna's mind through an identification with the neurotic spoiled rich-girl, Nicole Diver. At the same time there are obvious parallels between the career of the film's ruined architect Sandro and the novel's corrupted psychiatrist, Dick Diver.

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One would neither demand nor expect this level of sophistication from the straight commercial cinema, yet something has begun to percolate through. In his chapter on Hollywood and the novel in *Waiting for the End*, Leslie Fiedler asked: "How many scenes involving books remain in the memory out of the films of the last thirty years, excepting those shelves of meaningless books in libraries, obviously bought by the gross like furniture?" But then, said Fiedler,

"Who, for instance, can imagine the great figures who survive from movie to movie reading a book? Think of . . . John Wayne, Steve McQueen or Mickey Mouse entering a library or standing before a bookshelf with any serious intent in mind." For that matter one might ask just how much time Captain Ahab or Huck Finn spent haunting libraries.

Dr. Fiedler, however, raised these questions in 1964, and regretted that no American director used books the way Antonioni had done. As a leading investigator of the arcane processes of cultural osmosis, he would no doubt appreciate the irony of Steve McQueen withstanding a deadly knife assault in *Nevada Smith* by having a copy of McGuffey's Practical Reader concealed beneath his shirt. Equally he might note with approval the well-stocked shelves of George and Martha in the film version of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (not to mention the fact that the title wasn't changed to *Campus Fury*). No random job-lot of 'meaningless books' here: the complete Thomas Mann, well-thumbed, behind the bed, Günter Grass and David Storey in the living-room, *Paris Review* on the coffee table, and so on. It might indeed be . . . well, Dr. Fiedler's own house.

One doesn't want to make too much

of these films, but they are instances from expensive studio productions of books operating on the one hand (albeit pretty crudely) on a functional level, on the other hand in terms of décor. The theme of *Nevada Smith* is the way in which a man survives to carry out a self-appointed task through his willingness to learn. In this light the reading primer is not only a device to preserve him (which might have been a snuff-box or a medallion) but also an emblem. In the case of *Virginia Woolf* the books are only fine set decoration. I say 'only', but the rightness of the choice is an instance of the care that can be taken over such matters.

Naturally one might be wrong about *Virginia Woolf*—maybe every one of those books has some dramatic meaning beyond that of providing a convincing setting for a university couple. It is not a problem we have in the theatre, where we just see crowded bookshelves. On the stage, when George reads aloud from a book (a scene omitted in the film), many critics assumed it was a passage from Spengler, whereas it was an invention of Albee's. (Similarly, many people thought that singing the title of the play to the tune 'Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush' was intended to invoke Eliot's "The Hollow Men", when in fact it was done to avoid infringing the copyright

in the original music held by Walt Disney.) In the film we would have had to see the book from which George was reading.

Only from the front of the stalls can stage décor be seen in any detail, and only when the production is extremely dull does one inspect it with care. Thus in *The Owl and the Pussycat* boredom drove me to examine the hero's bookshelves and to wonder how this San Francisco intellectual happened to possess so many English book club editions and why all his postcards came from the Tate Gallery. Unimportant perhaps, but it can break the mood, as in an even more striking way did a curious anomaly in the Denver hospital sequence of *Lolita*. How had Humbert come by a copy of the Penguin edition of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in the Rocky Mountains? From a branch of the same store perhaps that sold Lolita's mother the English-style Gordon's Gin bottle in New England.

In the movies everything is brought up before our faces, and in the higher reaches of the cinema, ever since audiences came reeling out of *Citizen Kane* after raking every frame for a clue to the identity of Rosebud, we're often inclined to see significance where none is intended. As a comment on the increased visual awareness and sophistication of cinemagoers it might be pointed out that many people back in the early Forties searched for Rosebud in vain. Far off indeed seem the days when critics could state with admiration that the wedding scene in *Greed* was so compelling that no one noticed the discrepancy between the turn of the century interior and the

1920's life going on outside in the street.

These references to the other arts raise a number of important points about the cinema, only a few of which I have space to deal with and a number of which I haven't fully resolved. Initially there is a distinction to be drawn between those which are self-contained and those which refer one outside the film. This can only be a rough distinction, because even in the most obvious cases there is always some outside reference where a specific work is used. When Clive Donner accurately places a David Hockney on the rising executive's office wall in *Nothing But the Best* it is not necessary to recognise the painting to appreciate its effect. It has no personal meaning for Donner of the kind that, say, Renoir and Velasquez have for Godard in *Pierrot le Fou*. But before going further I'd like to mention and dispense with the three categories of film that actually concern artists.

The first of these is where works of identifiable authorship are attributed to fictional characters. Elizabeth Frink's sculptures attributed to Viveca Lindfors in Losey's *The Damned* raise no issues that go beyond the immediate thematic context of the film. When Ray Walston 'composes' little-known Gershwin songs in *Kiss Me, Stupid*, we are amused and charmed. In the film version of *The Horse's Mouth*, however, our view of Gulley Jimson's genius is conditioned by our own response to the paintings of John Bratby; we react quite differently to the first-person narrative of Joyce Cary's novel.

In the second category, where real work is produced by actors portraying artists in film biographies, our main attention is given to the extent to which an actor measures up to our notion of

the artist he portrays, and the conviction that he brings to the circumstances of creation. Thus Charles Laughton conveys some idea of the identity of Rembrandt; Cornel Wilde falls rather short of suggesting the sensibility of Chopin, etc.

The third category is where fake works are turned out by fictional characters. For example the ghastly paintings that supposedly make Dick Van Dyke the toast of Paris in *The Art of Love* are obviously less carefully planned (though no less indicative of the maker's intentions) than Richard Macdonald's paintings (sort of instant Josef Hermanns) run up for Hardy Kruger in Losey's *Blind Date*. In the case, say, of a fictitious novelist the burden of convincing the audience falls entirely upon the film actor—he must *be* a novelist in a way that no author in real life is obliged to.

These films however raise problems that I'm not particularly concerned with here. Rather, my interest centres upon the use of identifiable works, where what is at stake is neither the nature of their creation nor the personality of their creators, but the use that directors make of them.

The risks of misunderstanding, as I've already suggested, are immense. Let me give a couple of illustrations of what I mean. The first of these does not actually concern a work of art, though it brings up the same point. The critic of *The Guardian*, in a general slating of *Cul-de-Sac*, took Polanski to task for a reference to 'Vince's shirts'. This critic took it as an indication of the fact that Polanski was not as *au fait* with current Carnaby Street fashions as he might think. Now it is possible that the situation had changed since Polanski wrote the script, or that Polanski *did* realise the present standing of Vince's and consequently intended that the girl should be provincial and out-of-touch. It is equally feasible that the girl ad-libbed the line on the set. Whichever way you look at it, it seems singularly unimportant, and would anyway have little meaning of any kind outside a very small section of London life. But I say this because my knowledge of fashion is non-existent; the natural tendency is to discount the significance of references to fields of which we have little knowledge.

My other illustration follows on from this and is a good deal more important. It concerns the meaning that Antonioni attached to Hermann Broch's *The Sleepwalkers* in *La Notte*. Ian Cameron in his valuable monograph on Antonioni refers to it as "a vast egghead volume," but I doubt if Antonioni intends that we should see Valentina (Monica Vitti) merely as the sort of girl who sits around ostentatiously reading books at parties. On the contrary, I imagine that Antonioni is a great admirer of Broch and that he has been influenced by this Austrian

BOOKS AS DECOR. ELIZABETH TAYLOR, GEORGE SEGAL AND RICHARD BURTON IN "WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?"



writer, with whom he has certain affinities. It would seem that Valentina is intended to share Broch's beliefs in, if I understand it correctly, a metaphysical redemption from social problems rather than any possibility of their resolution. She is thus a person of superior awareness of her situation who has come to terms with alienation. This would tie in with the visit that Giovanni (Marcello Mastroianni) makes at the beginning of the film to a dying friend whose last work is an essay on the German Marxist critic T. W. Adorno, who greatly influenced the writing of Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*. It would be possible, however, to come to the same conclusion about Valentina without being in any way acquainted with Broch. Certainly Antonioni could count on very few people recognising *The Sleepwalkers*—far fewer than those who would know *Tender is the Night*.

The obvious difference between playing a piece of music or exhibiting a painting and showing a book is that the former is the thing itself and the latter can only have a meaning if the spectator knows it. Whatever may be said about Buñuel's use of Handel in *Viridiana*, no one would suggest that the choice of music was obscure. In the case of only a very few books can the general audience be expected to recognise the director's meaning immediately and relatively unambiguously. The Bible is perennially one of them; others vary with time and place. In the 1940s for instance there were numerous occasions (e.g. *Dear Octopus*, *Passport to Pimlico*) when an easy laugh was obtained by having someone unpack a case which contained *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* or *Fanny Hill* would presumably serve the same purpose today.*

With other books the director needs to take account of the possibilities of non-recognition, or of the variable subjective responses of his audience. One assumes that in *Some Came Running* Vincente Minnelli believed the audience would accept Dave Hirsch (Frank Sinatra) as a novelist in the main tradition of 20th Century fiction when he shows him taking from his valise the Viking Portable editions of Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck and Wolfe. Minnelli certainly missed the irony intended in the original novel, where James Jones stresses that this is not Hirsch's opinion of himself but that of his sister, who had given him the books. Likewise, the subsequent publication of Hirsch's story in *Atlantic Monthly* will only seem a matter of

* A few days after writing this I saw Knud Lief Thomsen's film *Gift*, in which the Bible and *Fanny Hill* are manipulated dialectically as ideological counters in a way that I assume would be intelligible to audiences throughout the Western world.



BOOKS AS CHARACTERS. "FAHRENHEIT 451".

abiding significance to those who regard that magazine as an important arbiter in literary matters.

I don't mean to suggest that the cinema should stick to invented periodicals and books, for these rarely carry conviction. It cannot be denied that a director has much greater control over his material if he does so, yet it is doubtful if this gain in control could compensate for the loss in verisimilitude. For instance, when Hitchcock shows Sean Connery in *Marnie* reading psychiatric textbooks with titles like "Frigidity in Women" and "The Mentality of the Criminal Female" one suspects that Hitchcock has himself invented these titles (or *would* have done if they didn't exist). While the titles serve his simple purposes well, there is something banal or naive about this sequence. In a very real sense the presentation of the books reflects the shallowness of the handling of psychology in the film as a whole.

It is interesting that this cinematic fascination with books should occur at a time when the ideas of Marshall McLuhan are gaining such currency, and that the cinema's greatest display of books should be in François Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451*, which as Truffaut himself pointed out has more literary references than all of Godard's pictures put together. *Fahrenheit* is not only a total rejection of the cinema's traditional attitude to literature but is also, by implication, a counterblast to McLuhan. In Ray Bradbury's novel very few books are actually mentioned by name. Inevitably in the movie we have to *see* the books, and in ways that are sometimes obvious and sometimes extremely subtle, Truffaut achieves an extraordinary

power and resonance by his selection and manipulation of titles.

There is a rather touching scene in John Frankenheimer's *The Manchurian Candidate*, that much underrated expression of Sixties Angst, in which Frank Sinatra's intellectual confusion is revealed by setting him in a room littered with works of 'contemporary significance' through which he has vainly sought the light. In *Fahrenheit 451* Truffaut has taken us beyond this crisis of literacy to McLuhan's "electronic global village" and revealed its nightmare qualities. In the first three-quarters of the film he builds up a situation in which we accept books as characters, and then leads us into his poetic final scene in which characters become human, walking books.

Paradoxically enough too, this rash of references to other arts and other films comes at a moment when everyone is celebrating the notion of pure or autonomous cinema. It is now necessary (or useful) to know far more about the other arts than it ever was in the past when movies really were self-contained. How can one properly appreciate *Paris Nous Appartient* without having read *Pericles*, or recent Bergman films without understanding Bach? And not only that, but working out what the play and the composer mean to Rivette and Bergman. (The relationship between *Pericles* and Rivette's film is somewhat different from that between *Othello* and *A Double Life* or *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Kiss Me Kate*.) Not that this has anything to do with what is pejoratively referred to as 'literary cinema', which is generally taken to mean movies that correspond formally to the well-made play or orthodox novel. The term has however always had a note of falsity about it—in the sense that Richard Brooks' film version of *Lord Jim* is 'literary cinema', while a more faithful adaptation of Conrad's novel would have resulted in a movie that strongly resembled *Citizen Kane*.

Finally it must be observed that the complexity of a film is not necessarily an indication of its importance, nor the amount of exegesis it demands an index of its quality.

While writing this article I've several times thought of the full-page advertisement for an American book club that appeared in popular magazines a few years ago. It depicted the club's advisory panel (the formidable triumvirate of W. H. Auden, Jacques Barzun and Lionel Trilling) sitting at a table facing an empty chair, on the sturdy leather back of which were the words "This place reserved for the man who prefers books to automobiles." Aesthetically and commercially the cinema has usually preferred automobiles. Godard and Truffaut would find it difficult to state their order of preference.

FILM REVIEWS

FAHRENHEIT 451

METAL SPIKES OF TV aerials sprout from the rooftops; a woman's cool voice speaks the film's credits. In a world which has outlawed print, words should not be written on the screen, a convention broken only at the end, when the rules require Truffaut to tell us in writing that his film was made at Pinewood.

In the future posited by *Fahrenheit 451* (Rank) television is the master. It has become the universal woman's magazine, blandly admonishing its viewers ('be tolerant today, cousins!'), drawing them into its game of happy families. The forbidden books, the books the firemen burn, preserve the harsher truths: the truths of dissent, the truths of pain which can still bring easy tears to the eyes of susceptible 'cousins'. In Ray Bradbury's novel, and I think even more in Truffaut's film, society has turned soft, cosy, protected from abrasive reality. Here is none of the hard computer intelligence of *Alphaville*, which is one of the reasons why to compare *Fahrenheit 451* with *Alphaville*, as some critics can't resist doing, isn't just the easy Stork and butter test that it might seem. Somewhere remote from *Fahrenheit's* suburbia there may be a power centre like Alpha 60. But it is too distant for its influence to be felt down in the nursery of the protected life.

Truffaut didn't originally intend to make the film in England; perhaps in the event it was lucky that he did. For England gives him a head start: here, rather than in France or America, suburbia still means not the anonymity of the skyscraper blocks, but a kind of cosiness. And wasn't it Orwell who first saw English life in terms of the nursery? For Truffaut's film views the future not as some alien machine world, but as the present subjected to a slight case of dislocation. The opening scene of book-burning is set very recognisably in Roehampton, the post-war pride of the L.C.C. As the ritual goes forward, while the books fall in slow motion to the pavement, a little crowd collects. It is an English crowd: drab, unobtrusive, mannerly. When a small boy picks up a stray book, his father jerks him back less in fear of reprisal than of attracting unseemly attention. In the urban coldness of

Alphaville or 1984, reading might seem a crime against the state. Here it's an offence against the conformity of the quiet life.

From this opening, the rest follows. Truffaut has been criticised for inadequate direction of actors whose language he didn't fully understand. Perhaps, and perhaps not. Understanding of language—on someone's part—comes through in the casually meticulous distinction drawn at one point between the words informer and informant. But what Truffaut has done, it seems to me, is to make adults behave like docile children. The woman at the garden gate, trying to describe the 'difference' of her book-reading neighbours, speaks with a child's unawareness; the three suburban wives, jolted by Montag's reading from *David Copperfield*, react like petulant ten-year-olds to the spoiling of their tea-party. Badly acted scenes? I don't think so.

The colours of the film are childish: a very red, shiny fire-engine rocketing through a countryside of very green grass; the warm, glinting, nursery firerail brass of the fire-station; the blocks of yellow, mahogany, pale blue in Montag's home. Outside, silver birches soften the regimented landscape; and the home of Clarisse, the schoolteacher who starts Montag reading, is like a Hansel and Gretel cottage preserved in the TV forest. Even the end, when Montag escapes to the hide-out of the book people, keeps the nursery scale. Their refuge looks hardly more remote than Richmond Park.

Truffaut, it seems to me, was right to confine his story physically to this almost minuscule scale. A bigger range, wider landscapes, a suggestion of some power larger than that represented by the fire-station and its sinisterly donnish captain, could have demolished it. For the plot concerns a small adventure in a man's mind. Montag, the contented fireman, begins to read the books he burns. Haltingly, he spells his way down the title page of *David Copperfield*. Pausing at the end of every line, he approaches the printed word with the

wariness of a man expecting a booby trap. Ironically, he reads by the light from the blank TV screen; ironically again, in his cowed white dressing-gown he looks like a worried young monk.

For him the adventure is not particularly joyful. Oskar Werner's detached, sometimes almost irascible performance holds incipient sentimentality at bay. Montag isn't a brave explorer of the world of books, but a troubled man accepting the need to read as an almost unwelcome duty. Once started, he can't stop. He hides books all over the house—his wife, encountering one behind a picture, brushes it away as though it were a spider. He can no longer face the fire-station pole; he can't bring himself to put on his helmet. When the end comes, and his own books have to be burned, he still reacts like a bewildered child. "This is my house!" he says as the fire-engine draws up.

Montag has been reading about rhinoceroses and *David Copperfield*. He has been burning *Mein Kampf* and *The World of Salvador Dali*, *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* and *Lolita*. The death of a woman (Bee Duffell as the Joan of Arc of Virginia Water) moves him to open denunciation. But Truffaut makes something a good deal more involving out of the death of a book, compelling us to look again at the Dali paintings as the pages shrivel, to read the decomposing print of Humbert Humbert's narrative. And among the Hitchcock references apparent through the film (sometimes nailed down by Bernard Herrmann's score), here is one perhaps slightly more abstruse. Fire—even the book-pyre by which the fireman warms his hands—is clean and beautiful. In the book-burning scenes, the old Hitchcock attraction-repulsion principle is at work: theory all on the side of the victims, practice admiring the terrible beauty of their burning.

If Truffaut, in these scenes, is inviting a certain ambiguity of response, he has also provided his film with one fascinatingly ambiguous character. Montag is straight-

"FAHRENHEIT 451": OSKAR WERNER.



forwardness itself: a conventional man moved to do an unconventional thing. The two girls played by Julie Christie are both types—Clarisse the innocent rebel, Linda the innocent conformist, drugged by life with her TV family and her boxes of pills. And the mark of these children of the advertising slogans is self-absorption: women are continually stroking their furs, caressing their own faces, lost in their dreams. The film's one equivocal, wide-awake adult is the fire captain. Typically, he has some fussy, nanny-like habits, such as the maddening one of talking to people in the third person. ("Montag will like that," he says, as though a fireman's promotion were a nursery treat.)

The captain expects Montag to fall into the fatal temptation of reading. He has obviously been there himself: he knows the books by more than their covers, and when the firemen come upon the great hidden library in the old schoolteacher's house, he exults in its dangerous glories. Reading is forbidden because it tempts the children to ask questions; because no two writers can be found to agree. The captain, brilliantly played by Cyril Cusack, puts authority's case with the suspect fervour of the ex-Communist leading the witch-hunt. Montag has no answer: he can only fire from the hip with his flamethrower.

When Montag escapes, he seems to be running away from order and the future into the untidiness of the past. A loud-speaker car tours the empty streets, ordering people to their front doors to watch for the fugitive. (Roehampton again? Certainly effective because the people look so lackadaisically obedient.) By contrast, the deserted railway track, with grass almost burying the lines, seems to lead into the wild wood of childhood.

But Montag's arrival in the shantytown settlement of the book people is a hazardous moment for the film. The whole idea of this walking human library, preserving the classic texts against extinction, seems just too fanciful. Pleasant though it is that Julie Christie should have committed the *Memoirs of Saint-Simon* to memory, there is something irritatingly coy about the way characters introduce themselves to the newcomer as 'Pride and Prejudice' or 'Waiting for Godot'.

To hold his very unstressed style to the end, and still to dodge banality, Truffaut needed something extraordinary. He found it in a fall of snow—and if it's true that this was fortuitous, one can only say that the rest of the film had earned such a dazzling gift from the gods. In a makeshift shelter, an old man is passing on his memory of *Weir of Hermiston* to his young grandson, reciting the scene in which Archie talks about the agonies of life with his father, the hanging judge: "How was I to love him? He has never spoken to me, never smiled upon me; I do not think he ever touched me..." Under the eye of his own stern grandfather, the boy stumbles through the words. And then, electrifying in its quietness, the time-slip, the transition to the lake icy under snow, the words now confidently repeated, with the masterly interpolation into Stevenson's text: "And he died, as he thought he would, as the first snows of winter fell." Marvellously simple and specific, like all the best things in *Fahrenheit*, this ending is a heroic enlargement of the film's range. It is as though Truffaut has drawn on everything he knows about cinema to express unshakable loyalty to the written word.

PENELOPE HOUSTON



ANNE BANCROFT IN "SEVEN WOMEN".

SEVEN WOMEN

"STOCK MELODRAMA ABOUT North China mission ravaged by Mongolian barbarians; for program markets, but John Ford name to bally."—Thus, inimitably, *Variety* on Ford's *Seven Women* (M-G-M). Apart from *Cahiers du Cinéma* (four stars, for a *chef-d'oeuvre*, from five out of their *Conseil des Dix*), it seems that the French didn't think much of *Seven Women* either. Laconically, and as philosophically as befits a man with 50 years of film-making behind him, Ford told *Cahiers*: "La production ne l'a pas aimé, ce film. Pas de vedettes. Pourtant Anne Bancroft et Margaret Leighton sont des grandes actrices. Je pense d'ailleurs que c'est une de mes meilleures mises en scène, mais le public ne l'a pas aimé. Ce n'était pas ce qu'il voulait."

Seven Women is in fact a rather remarkable film: unexpected from Ford (even the title, when you consider that Ford has never been highly regarded as a director of women); quintessentially Ford; visually spellbinding and certainly one of his best made films. Two things above all seem to contribute to its surprising and almost total success. One is the screenplay by Janet Green and John McCormick. The other is the cast.

The script, based on a short story by Norah Lofts, is set entirely inside an isolated American mission in the summer of 1935. The mission, stuck on the Chinese-Mongolian border, is threatened from within itself (this takes up roughly half the film's economical 86 minutes) and from without, for a band of Mongol terrorists are on the rampage. The threat within the mission takes the form of neurotic tension. All appears calm on the surface, as mission-head Agatha Andrews (Margaret Leighton) strides about her duties in her severe, ankle-length dress, rattling her keys; and fat, laughing Florrie Pether (Betty Field) rocks

contentedly to-and-fro on the porch, looking more like Jane Darwell than Miss Darwell herself, thirty years ago, rocking on much the same chair and much the same porch. It soon emerges that Agatha Andrews is a repressed Lesbian boiling quietly away with self-righteousness. As for Florrie, she is pregnant at a dangerously late age, worried because there is no doctor, and a bit unhinged about her recently acquired husband (Eddie Albert), who is a bit unhinged himself what with his delusions about being an ordained priest or whatever it is he would like to have been.

Eventually a doctor arrives. But she is a tinder-box able, indeed eager, to kindle fire. The arrival itself is one of several splendid *coups de théâtre*, as donkeys and coolies accompany a cowboyish, crop-haired figure in stetson, brown leather jacket held jauntily open at the hip, and jodhpurs. Dr. Cartwright (Anne Bancroft) is cynical, worldly, smokes at the dinner-table (outrage from Agatha Andrews, who hasn't even said grace yet), and in due course invites everyone to get as stoned as she is. Almost her only ally is the youngest girl in the mission (Sue Lyon), who needless to say is the unsuspecting recipient of Miss Andrews' latent sexual yearnings.

All this is very much the stuff of Janet Green's type of screenwriting (*Sapphire*, *Victim*), the schematic treatment of adult problems, done with some sophistication yet somehow slightly dated and stagey. At one and the same time the film succeeds in spite of, and because of, this formulary script. There are bits and pieces that might have come out of a screenplay by Dudley Nichols, Lamar Trotti, Nunnally Johnson or Sonya Levien. It is exactly the script Ford needed for this Thirties subject, handled with a Sixties veneer of post-post-Freudian awareness.

The three early climaxes are unerringly effective: the arrival of Dr. Cartwright; the procession of refugees from a nearby British mission, headed with quiet dignity by Miss Binns (Flora Robson in her best screen

performance for years); the cholera epidemic that coincides with the birth of Florrie's baby. Between these high points, angry dialogue exchanges between the doctor and Agatha Andrews are shot simply, effortlessly, with restrained authority: two women baiting each other, the camera halfway along the length of the office, a green lamp casting a focal glow in the centre of the screen. Throughout, the mission is made as dimensional and detailed as the prison in *The Prisoner of Shark Island*—one of several Ford films of which this one is occasionally reminiscent.

The last half of *Seven Women* allows the cast to come into its own. Previously, there have been one or two *longueurs*, with characters repeating points already made. The second half puts these women in circumstances of extreme peril, where they are required to do deeds and react as men have done deeds and reacted in the past for Ford—in *Men without Women*, in *The Lost Patrol* and *The Long Voyage Home* and *Wagonmaster*. Terror and death invade the mission in the persons of Mike Mazurki and Woody Strode, who play their brutish roles with much the same rebuttal of human feeling as did Charles Kemper's Uncle Shiloh Clegg in *Wagonmaster*.

To get back her medical bag so that she can treat Florrie's baby, Dr. Cartwright gives herself to the bandit leader. First, though, there is a show of strength between the two bandit giants, who wrestle half-naked in the compound: an archetypal Ford scene, this. Looking out at the spectacle gets mousy Anna Lee quite excited at such barbarism—a stock character comment one could well have done without, except that Mildred Dunnock (quietly excellent as always) closes the episode with acid finality. Meanwhile, Margaret Leighton goes steadily mad (though that is hardly the appropriate adverb), eyeing Anne Bancroft balefully and calling her a whore of Babylon. She is denied a grand finale; and here I do think that the script is being a shade too coy and over-intelligent. Miss Leighton, like Kim Stanley, is the kind of actress who should be encouraged to carry her portrayals right through to their inevitable conclusions.

Anne Bancroft, on the other hand, is more restrained than I ever recall. Apart from one or two moony close-ups suggestive of self-appraisal, she plays Dr. Cartwright with swinging authority, plainly enjoying her war of attrition against Margaret Leighton as much as John Wayne sparring with Henry Fonda. The end is totally hers; and for all that it derives from Capra's *Bitter Tea of General Yen*, it is yet another genuine *coup de théâtre*. Satisfied that the warlord has kept his word and allowed the other women to leave, she dresses in Oriental costume, lights her way through the passages to the warlord's room, and drops poison into both their drinks.

A colleague who saw the film at the same time described it as Ford's *Nazarin*. The description does connect. Ford has made a beautiful film, in Sixties Panavision and Metrocolor, as beautiful as any of his Thirties' masterpieces and with no less command over his medium. He has brought ambiguity, a hint of Buñuel's "Thank God I'm an atheist!" to a story of seven somewhat tiresome females whose qualifications for mission work remain uncompromisingly invisible (except for Flora Robson's Methodist) throughout. Moreover, he has done it with none of the facile cynicism that mars the recent work of Hitchcock and Wilder; and with more density, more solidity, than that other esteemed veteran,



"MASCULIN FÉMININ": JEAN-PIERRE LEAUD, CHANTAL GOYA.

Howard Hawks. It will be interesting to see if *Seven Women* fails here, as it has done elsewhere. At any rate, to love *Seven Women* you obviously have to love Ford, know his work, and accept it at his own valuation—"une de mes meilleures mises en scène."

PETER JOHN DYER

MASCULIN FÉMININ

AFTER HIS DESPERATE FLIGHT out of time in search of a Garden of Eden, Pierrot le Fou kills himself by wrapping a stick of dynamite round his head and striking a match: it is still a time for eloquence, for the grand gesture of despair. But for Paul, hero of *Masculin Féminin* (Gala), tied securely to 1965 and creature of a Paris made in U.S.A., there is no possibility of romantic escape: and at the end of the film he simply disappears, perhaps a suicide, perhaps victim of an accident, no one really knows.

"Fifteen precise actions" announces the opening title, and this is precisely what we get. Scenes set in the Bus Palladium (dancing, bowling alley and all mod. cons.), recording studio (a new number for the Top of the Pops), and laundromat (brassière adverts dominating, even here); scenes in the street, with a murder, a suicide, a man soaked in petrol igniting himself in protest against Vietnam, all passing more or less unremarked; scenes of interview, in which people stammer and struggle to express their interest, only to reveal a vast unawareness. Behind it all, as Richard Roud has noted (Summer SIGHT AND SOUND), rises the unhappy love of Paul for Madeleine, like a plaintive violin.

An unheard violin, I would add. There is a direct recall of *Pierrot le Fou* in the title: "Il n'y a plus qu'une femme et un homme, et un océan de sang répandu." But where Pierrot was a writer, capable of singing his own love and crying his own distress, Paul suffers, thinks and feels in silence, unable to make contact. Although he is of the generation described as "the children of Marx and

of Coca-Cola," he is not one of them, being automatically excluded by his need for 'la tendresse'. For his friend Robert, militant in politics, life means talking revolution, painting 'U.S. GO HOME' on S.H.A.P.E. cars, and signing petitions whenever they turn up (Paul plays along, but mutters "Brazil . . . last week it was Madrid. Next week, what?"). For the girls it means pretty clothes, success in the pops, an answer to their prayer for uninvolved, "Give us this day our TV and automobile, but deliver us from freedom." Marx for the young male, Coca-Cola for the female: *mais où est la tendresse?*

Paul, awkward and out of place as a Martian, observes. Like Pierrot, he tries to build a private Garden of Eden; like Pierrot, he fails. And all around him, counterpointing his inability to communicate his love to Madeleine in a world which excludes it, the atrocities pile up, gradually driving him further and further into himself until he vanishes. As he talks in a café, a quarrel breaks out, a woman runs out and shoots her husband ("Shut the door," says Paul); as he loiters in the Palladium, a man staggers up and stabs himself in the stomach (Paul retreats fastidiously); as he stands in the street, a stranger asks for a match and sets fire to himself ("La vache!" Paul mutters indignantly, asking for his matches back).

Alienated in the extreme, these atrocities might be called quite literally a living newspaper, a dramatic rendering of the stories one skims through at the breakfast table; it is as if we were being asked to witness the actuality behind the headlines we accept so casually as an inevitable part of everyday living. In each case, Paul's reaction might be taken for indifference (and probably will be taken simply as a sick joke by Godard's detractors). But would a cry of horror from Paul really tell one anything about him (other than that he knows how to react conventionally), or about the events themselves? As Michel Delahaye puts it, the most terrible thing about contemporary living for Godard is "la banalité de l'atrocité, et l'atrocité de cette banalité." It is not what Paul says or does about these atrocities that

matters, but how they affect his behaviour; and we are shown that they drive him, spiritually and probably physically, to despair and suicide.

Paul, a modern pilgrim in search less of progress than of simple humanity, wanders through this world of sick headlines, discovering that his love for Madeleine is as precarious and open to debasement as anything else—even the reputation of Johann Sebastian Bach. "Oui, j'aime beaucoup les Beatles," Madeleine tells the reporter who interviews her after the success of her first disc, "et dans le classique, Jean Sébastien Bach." So Paul finds himself relegated to an afterthought, a useful object for display on a coffee-table.

Casual and fragmentary as it may seem, *Masculin Féminin* is in fact probably Godard's most complex film to date. If Paul's odyssey in search of tenderness takes us through what is virtually a collage of *la vie moderne* at all levels—Bob Dylan as Vietnik and Negro as Black Muslim, The Pill and The Brassière, Vietnam and the Teenage Question—it is also a foray into the age-old Sex War. The title, after all, is "Masculine Feminine", and as each caption comes up to introduce the next precise action, one hears the whining ricochet of a bullet as another shot is fired. Woman kills husband to save her child; prostitute bargains with client and humiliates him; little girl offers to undress in photomat booth; Elizabeth makes trouble between Paul and Madeleine; Madeleine destroys Paul; woman preys, man obeys. Summing it all up is the parody of *The Silence*—the film-within-the-film which is all that remains of the second Maupassant story and the Swedish half of the film. As Paul and the three girls watch, a man and a woman confront each other in a bedroom like animals preparing to fight, in a welter of elementary sexual grunts.

"Jamais deux regards ensemble," says Paul at the very beginning of the film, "pas trace de vie, silence, vide . . ." And by the end he has discovered the impossibility of two people meeting. Sex, yes; love, no. The theme is exactly the same as that of *Pierrot le Fou*, only replacing the flamboyance of Pierrot by the anonymity of Paul. Appropriately, therefore, the style of the film is a return to the austerity of *Vivre sa Vie*, with the opening sequences almost exactly matching: a medium close shot of Paul alone in his first monologue, then of Madeleine alone reading a magazine, Paul's presence revealed only by cigarette smoke at the edge of the frame, until finally a slight pan brings both together in a single frame. The same economy is observed throughout the film, with most of the sequences shot with a fixed camera in a single take, the complexity arising from the orchestration of references, visual and aural. It is unquestionably a Godard film; and—for the benefit of those who maintain that Godard is Coutard—the cameraman's name is Willy Kurant.

TOM MILNE

DER VERLORENE

WHEN I ASKED THE Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde to lend the National Film Theatre a print of Peter Lorre's *Der Verlorene* (*The Lost One*), I was booking the film on reputation. I had not seen it when the New London Film Society put it on in 1951, the year the film was made, and it

hadn't been seen in this country again until it was included in the NFT's recent Romantic Agony season. It was something of a lucky hunch to place it under the sub-heading 'The Shadow of de Sade', but in the event this quiet, ambiguous film couldn't have been more aptly introduced. Though Lorre's Brechtian direction is admirable, and his script (in collaboration with Benno Vigny and Axel Eggebrecht) highly intelligent, it is Lorre's contribution as an actor that makes the film so strange and memorable.

His research doctor in Nazi Germany, betrayed by a fiancée whom he murders and then goaded by mental unbalance into further murders, is the sort of tailor-made role that could invite all kinds of self-indulgence. Yet Dr. Rothe turns out to be one of Lorre's most restrained, economical and thoughtful characterisations. Outwardly, Lorre displays a man of shabby, haggard ordinariness, trudging stockily to work through bare snowy landscapes, finally trudging with the same air of hopeless determination to his death under a railway train. The hints of insanity are few and chilling. The mildest, yet still curiously alarming, symptom is obsessive chain-smoking: there is the same obsessiveness about his pacing up and down, the faded charm, the bitter laugh, the disinterested smile, the dedication to his work on a strategic vaccine serum.

The clues to Rothe's mentality are almost all internal. The first is external, a brilliant touch of anticipatory melodrama, when Rothe passes a nervous hand over his face after giving an animal an injection, and leaves a streak of blood across his face. The actual murder is preceded by one of those brief, frightening close-ups that only such actors as Lorre and Laughton seem able to do just right: for a second the camera catches an expression of quite inhuman, pent-up malice—it was the one moment during a screening of the film when a perceptible shudder ran through the audience.

At one viewing, there seems a weakness, a lack of clarity or explication, about this first murder. Is he driven to it by his fiancée's disloyalty, or by an inner compul-

sion to kill? From then on, all the indications are that the nightmare atmosphere of a Nazi Germany where he must go unpunished has turned him into a pathological killer. The prostitute he goes back with reads it in his eyes and screams out: "You're one of those!" Nonchalantly, Lorre strolls out of the house unimpeded. Left at liberty after his first crime because his services are needed for the war effort, he now appears immune from and indifferent to his own peril. There is even a mocking humour about his future actions and reactions. In one of the film's best scenes, a blowsy woman (Lotte Rausch) sits with him in an empty underground carriage during an air-raid, provoking him and doing a bit of a strip-act. When the raid is over and the train enters a station, Lorre wanders off leaving the corpse stuffed under a seat.

This same mixture of tact, unreality and distanciation informs the sequence of the anti-Hitler plot: Lorre sits around, totally unconcerned, then wanders out to observe the messy fiasco of getaway cars and shootings below in the street. But for the language, one would barely guess this was Germany. Of course Vaclav Vich's magnificently expressionistic photography is in the German tradition, but there are no swastikas, and scarcely a Gestapo uniform or a portrait of Hitler in sight. The ending has the same dreamlike, matter-of-fact quality. Lorre is finally unmasked after the war by the former Nazi agent (played with easy good-nature by Karl John) who helped drive him to commit his first murder. Lorre becomes affable and loquacious and heated by turns, and when he finally produces a gun and calmly shoots his evil agent (a hint of the *doppelgänger* theme here), it seems no more than a perfectly dutiful, rational act of expiation by proxy. It makes Lorre's subsequent walk through the snowy landscapes and down the railway line to his own death curiously moving and, indeed, tragic. This is a real *film maudit*—partly because of the sad circumstances surrounding its rejection by the German public—and merits proper exhibition even at this late date.

PETER JOHN DYER

PETER LORRE IN "DER VERLORENE".



SECONDS

THE EXTRAORDINARY THING about John Frankenheimer's *Seconds* (Paramount) is that so much of it should be so uncharacteristic of Frankenheimer. The opening scenes look like real Frankenheimer territory. Oscillating Saul Bass titles give way to reveal a railway station, with the camera peering down, in a shot instantly reminiscent of the shunting yard scenes in *The Train*, as people swarm across the platforms like so many ants. We move in closer, and two of the figures are isolated, one anonymous man following on the heels of another as he picks his way through the crowd. The train pulls out, and the second man slips something into his quarry's hand. A precise, economical opening, yet one that illustrates succinctly the combination of cool detachment and riveting involvement which Frankenheimer brings to scenes like this. In a few brief shots we are drawn into the private fears of a man we know nothing about: behind an apparently ordinary façade there is menace lurking, and we are made to feel it.

The victim of the menace is Hamilton (John Randolph), a rich, middle-aged banker enervated by the routine of his very conventional existence; and Frankenheimer brilliantly sustains our involvement in Hamilton's predicament throughout the day and into the evening as he waits for the mysterious telephone call which will usher him into another world. The call comes, and at the other end of the line is the disembodied voice of an old friend Hamilton had thought dead. Hamilton, it transpires, has been nominated to become a 'second', a client of an organisation which undertakes to provide a new face, a new body, and a new personality.

Frankenheimer plays some witty delaying tricks as Hamilton is steered between the steam presses of a dry cleaner's and through

a nicely incongruous meat market (long lines of carcasses themselves taking on a threatening appearance) before being deposited within the organisation's headquarters. The mood is sustained as, with Hamilton, we inwardly wince at the shrewdly observed obsequiousness of the establishment's impersonal employees. And the ironic ambiguity in which Frankenheimer excels (one thinks of the press conference in *The Manchurian Candidate*) is given an extra edge in this sequence by the finely balanced performances of Will Geer as the organisation's unctuous veteran controller and Jeff Corey as the personnel executive, busily assuring the new client that the Cadaver Procurement section will come up with an appropriate corpse as a replacement.

So far, so good: this is Frankenheimer at the top of his form—the grotesque transformation on the operating table, underlined by some effective camera distortion (photography by the ever dependable James Wong Howe), and the unnerving silence of the room full of expressionless men, each immersed in a pointless mechanical task. But once the transformation is completed, the film takes an abrupt plunge from which it never really emerges. A psychiatric test has revealed Hamilton's subconscious desire to be a painter, and so he becomes Wilson (Rock Hudson), provided with luxury living quarters on the Californian coast and a solemn manservant to get him acquainted with his neighbours. One of them turns out to be freedom-seeking Norma (Salome Jens), and Wilson is soon off with her to a local wine festival. There follows a preposterous scene in which the local community, whipped into a Dionysiac frenzy, disrobe themselves and plunge one after another into a wine barrel for a frenetic trampling session among the grapes.

When, after Wilson gets drunk at a party and reverts to his Hamilton personality, it is revealed that even his guests are themselves clients of the organisation, the revelation has none of the menacing effect

that it might have had if only Frankenheimer had kept *Seconds* moving, like his previous films, on straight lines. One wonders what exactly Frankenheimer was trying to do in this central section, which looks as though it might have been made by anyone. There is a suggestion, in the exchanges of significant dialogue on the beach and in the emergence of Wilson-Hamilton's revolt against his new personality, that the film is toying with the deeper implications of personality-change. But if this is what we are meant to infer, the idea is never allowed to get off the ground, and the almost total change of style in these scenes serves only to blunt the edges of a potentially good theme.

In the final sequence, as Wilson is carried away bound and gagged to the operating theatre to become just another corpse in the organisation's stock, it looks as though Frankenheimer is back on his home ground. But by this time the damage has been done, and the grisly final scene comes over only as a hastily engineered conclusion. Perhaps the real trouble is that a brilliantly conceived idea is never really worked out beyond its first stage. Whatever might have been made of the idea after the personality-change, Frankenheimer's development of it falls decidedly flat. More than that, it doesn't even look like Frankenheimer.

DAVID WILSON

A THOUSAND CLOWNS

WE OFTEN SEEM to be accusing filmmakers of undervaluing the material they are working on in adaptations from fiction or the stage. Rarely is the boot on the other foot, but Fred Coe's version of Herb Gardner's *A Thousand Clowns* (United Artists) turns out to be an example. What the play did was to give us a slight, half-comic, half-sentimental view of a mildly odd-ball character: a writer who has got fed up with writing idiotic scripts for a terrible comedian and drifted instead into an improbably cosy life of romantic fantasy-weaving in the company of his twelve-year-old nephew. It was all smooth, expert, with no jagged corners of reality left to lacerate an audience who wanted to say "Lucky guy!" but at the same time nod sagely when the little woman sent the poor man back from his ivory tower to mix with his kind.

Fine, as far as it went. The funny bits were often very funny, and the sentimental bits no doubt very well calculated for the American market. But Fred Coe, choosing the play for his debut as a film director, has chosen to see the whole thing in a different light, to try to make it a study in depth of a modern rebel. It is a brave try, but it fails. As long as the script remains character comedy it works. The pair of social workers who come to examine the nephew's home background and promptly get hopelessly at odds with each other, professionally and personally, are an excellent comic creation, very well played by William Daniels and Barbara Harris; and the scene of their defeat by the uncle (Jason Robards), who puts the man to flight and keeps the young woman for further investigation, is extremely well done. But from there on the film starts to go subtly wrong.

The interludes of 'cinema' put in between the scenes of the play work for a while because they contrive to forward the plot (the first, of uncle and nephew running all over New York together, provides us with

LAST SCENE OF "SECONDS": ROCK HUDSON EN ROUTE TO THE CADAVER PROCUREMENT SECTION.



the necessary now-read-on information; the second, with uncle and lady psychiatrist ditto, shows their relationship burgeoning). As the story gathers momentum, however, they grow more and more evidently irrelevant. And when we are asked to switch from regarding the uncle as a fantastic comedy character, any boy's dream of what an uncle ought to be, and see him instead as someone who has said no to the rat-race and must be judged in perfect seriousness on the quality of his rebellion, common sense starts uncomfortably to break in. The picture presented both of the rat-race and of the rebellion is so far from any conceivable reality that consideration on these terms just is not possible. A lot of the little character touches are still acute, and many of the incidental lines are very funny, but the marshmallow centre shows through.

Paradoxically, it wouldn't if the film were not so intelligently made. A straight, staid transcription like *Sunday in New York* or *Mary, Mary* would slip nearly all the deficiencies of the play past us. But Fred Coe's handling of the material is so firm and unsentimental, and his cast play with such care and devotion to whatever reality they may find in Mr. Gardner's pasteboard creations, that the script is subjected to a clear, cold light it cannot hope to withstand. Still, a very amiable, likeable and often a very funny film. Fred Coe is obviously a film talent to be reckoned with; one can only wish him better luck next time in what he chooses to turn the talent to.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM

FUNNIER THINGS SHOULD have happened; funnier things could have happened, one feels, if the producers had lined up their objectives more clearly in their sights. On the one hand, there is the framework of Shevelove and Gelbart's Broadway hit, with its slow-fuse Jewish-American humour, its carefully set up jokes about dithering middle-aged men and bullying wives let loose in Brooklyn-on-Tiber. This humour takes time: above all, time for the actors to build contact with the audience. On the other hand, there is Richard Lester's style, glancing, cool, nerveless, and dependent on perpetual motion. Lester seems to circle the comedy, jabbing, weaving, feinting, hardly landing a solid punch.

What works with the Beatles, in fact, won't do when the actors are a generation older, and physically more resistant to the whole idea of being stood on their heads. And the kind of infant-school surrealism which made the snow sequence in *Help!* so enchanting can't get going when the protagonists are Zero Mostel, Phil Silvers and Michael Hordern. Style, as the film progresses, becomes more and more like conscientiously strenuous decoration, an effort to manufacture exuberance. Why take a shot upside-down; or flick through half-a-dozen of the briefest, most eye-straining glimpses of the characters; or turn a song into a display exercise for the camera, shuffling through locations as though they were playing cards? The only answer would seem to be, why not.

In its more stationary moments, the film affords the unexpected pleasure of watching Michael Hordern lift scenes from under the noses of the more celebrated comedians.

Perhaps his timing is closer to Lester's: Mostel and Silvers can be discerned working their way gradually towards comic effects which the camera is inclined to snatch away. Most of the film's best things come, as might be expected, in fits and starts: four tiny, remote figures skipping and singing along a towering viaduct; a splendid glimpse of Pamela Brown, a high-priestess cheated of her human sacrifice; a fleeting shot of a horse sitting, with an air of forlorn bemusement, in a Turkish bath; a beautifully timed gag, in which Michael Crawford trustingly dispatches a pigeon with a love missive, and the bird plummets instantly to the ground. Best, perhaps, a scene between pupil and tutor, in which the flat earth theory is expounded with devoted fatuity.

These are almost marginal notes to the comedy: casual, genial, funny. Too much of the rest is either frantically diversified action (a chariot-chase, for instance, which gathers speed without comic momentum), or an effort to lift the text almost bodily across the footlights. At its most characteristic, however, in Zero Mostel's theatre-sized performance as the errant slave Pseudolus, *Forum* (United Artists) remains a stage creation. Tony Walton's consciously chic designs suggest theatre; the jokes (about laying on 'a sit-down orgy for forty', and so on) sit up and ask for an audience reaction. And the film slips away down the gap between two entertainment formulas. With it, sadly, slips Buster Keaton, glimpsed intermittently panting around Rome's seven hills, or casting a dejected eye on the proceedings. Lester's admiration for Keaton makes it the sadder that Buster's part in the film should come across almost as a reproach from the past to the present.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

HAMMER & CO.

AT THE END OF 1958, when the big companies were cutting down on production in the face of falling box-office returns, the *News Chronicle* printed a leading article deploring the rise in the number of horror films. "It is important," they said, "to hammer home to the film-makers that the public's taste is better than they would like to think." Their choice of verb was somewhat ironic, for it was Hammer Films who were insulting public taste with a seemingly inexhaustible output of horror. And public taste or no, Hammer have hardly had a box-office failure, even with their non-horror products. Now Hammer have made their hundredth film, and appropriately enough they have fired off their big guns and come up with a spectacular epic of prehistory, *One Million Years B.C.* (Warner-Pathé). As spectaculars go, this one is hardly the discovery of the year; but whatever its merits as a film, it is done with a finesse that one has come to associate with Hammer productions in recent months.

Prehistory being what it is, there are moments in the film when the cave-women's antics look rather risible. A bevy of well-rounded blondes, looking no more prehistoric than something out of a Hollywood fancy dress junket, splash daintily about in a pool; and there is something of a "Me Tarzan, you Jane" note about their exchanges with the men. But the point of the film is the monsters, and a superb looking lot they turn out to be. No skimping with rubber miniatures here: at least half a



"A THOUSAND CLOWNS": BARBARA HARRIS, JASON ROBARDS.

dozen imposing creatures, from a Brontosaurus to a Triceratops, make an appearance, and they all look and behave like the real thing. Just occasionally an awkward close-up reveals studio origins, and there is one unfortunate scene when Raquel Welch, as the leading light of the Shell women, is snatched up in the claws of a predatory Pterodactyl and carried off to the nest as an *hors d'oeuvre* for the monster bird's young. For the most part, though, the monsters are splendidly awe-inspiring. On its own level the film is a huge success (Don Chaffey's direction is more than competent), a superb piece of professionalism.

Professionalism, in fact, has become the keynote of Hammer. Over the years the conveyor-belt attitude towards production (a batch of titles like *Maniac*, *Paranoiac*, *Nightmare*, most of them slipped into the circuits without benefit of a press show) has given way to a state of affairs where each film is made with the emphasis on production values. Hammer is still principally concerned with horror (though they have ventured into the psychological thriller with films like Losey's *The Damned* and Seth Holt's *The Nanny*), but they seem less content than they were to churn out untidy variations on a Mary Shelley/Bram Stoker derivative. And one of the consequences of this relatively recent concern for the way their films look is that they have attracted not a few established writers and established actors. One is not so very surprised, for instance, to see both Joan Fontaine and Kay Walsh in another current Hammer production, *The Witches* (Warner-Pathé).

Joan Fontaine plays a schoolteacher who arrives, fresh from a nervous breakdown in Africa, in an English village to take up a post as headmistress of the local school. Witchcraft duly rears its familiar head (decapitated dolls stuck with pins, and inexplicable illnesses), but—disappointingly—it is not until the end of the film that we see the witches in action. Their appearance, however, is worth waiting for, if only for the sight of Kay Walsh goading her coven into a frenzy and rising, in the throes of a Latin



FINALE OF "THE WITCHES": KAY WALSH, JOAN FONTAINE.

chant, to plunge her sacrificial dagger into a young maiden of the village. Elsewhere the director, Cyril Frankel, misses a number of opportunities for chilling effect, notably when a flock of sheep appear from nowhere to menace the headmistress. But this final scene is done with considerable relish, and not least because of the trio of actresses—Kay Walsh, Joan Fontaine, destroying the sorcery by defiling the sacrificial altar with her own blood, and Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, cowering mesmerised in the corner and wishing she had stayed at home with her cowslip wine.

The finale of *The Witches* well illustrates the pattern which Hammer productions have established—good actors, workmanlike scripts, and above all the look of the thing. In these two new Hammers, and in films like *The Psychopath* and *The Skull* (both Paramount, both directed by Freddie Francis) it is the imaginatively atmospheric use of sets and colour which makes all the difference. All we need now is for Pinter to write a script for "Red Riding Hood"—which is, after all, only something of a variation on the werewolf theme.

DAVID WILSON

THE QUILLER MEMORANDUM

HAROLD PINTER'S script for *The Quiller Memorandum* (Rank) could be taken as still further evidence of everyone's current passion for playing spy games. Or perhaps as a logical extension of Pinterism, into an area where characters may be assumed (for entertainment purposes, at least) to talk professionally the way Pinter's people talk naturally. At any rate, it is an engaging script, very mannered and at the same time ingenuously loyal to the genre. It is the script which lifts *The Quiller Memorandum* just—if only just—out of the growing tedium of life among the secret agents.

The odd thing is that *Quiller* is so far from being what one might think of as a

Pinter spy, so far from the Le Carré world of double-talk and double-cross. Although George Segal plays him with a sympathetically rueful frown which implies depths of ratiocination, he is basically the kind of secondary modern agent who chooses to operate by setting himself up as a target. Luckily, his neo-Nazi opponents, led by the knuckle-cracking Max von Sydow, play by the same house rules. They are quite tough and practical about shooting lesser agents. When it comes to Quiller, however, the best they can do is to booby-trap a car which they have no particular reason for thinking he intends to drive. So Quiller survives to save West Berlin from neo-Nazi infiltration, and walks away from the camera and his double-dealing girl friend (Senta Berger) in a long-held shot which looks like a reverse angle tribute to *The Third Man*.

This final shot is a reminder (there are others in the film, like the echo of Lang when all the cars except two make off from the traffic lights) of inbreeding in the secret agent world. Now that it is becoming more and more difficult to do this sort of thing straight, what counts is less the direct assets of the story-telling than the fringe benefits of strange locations or oblique hints and nods in the direction of other films. *Quiller* has some excellent locations, like the Hitler-built stadium where Alec Guinness is found munching salami, or the towering building arrogantly crowned with the Mercedes emblem. But scenes in such places as empty swimming pools look like the now customary surrender to locations for their own, irrelevant sake. *Quiller* actually takes the pursuit of irrelevance into its title. What or where in the film is the *Quiller Memorandum*?

Still, all this disconnection plays into Pinter's hands, and a character like Alec Guinness' spy master, with his disconcerting air of detachment from everyone and everything around him, matches the writer's wit with the actor's. A pity that Michael Anderson should have chosen to direct much of the film at something less than walking pace, as though he felt the really

telling moments came in the pauses between the lines. Laborious direction makes the film seem even more conscious of its mixed origins. All the same, it is this mixture—the Pinterisation of Bond, as it were—that gives *The Quiller Memorandum* a freakish charm which has perhaps more to do with literary fantasy than with its merits as a film.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

IS PARIS BURNING?

TWENTY YEARS SEPARATE René Clément's *Bataille du Rail* from *Is Paris Burning?* (Paramount). The difference between the two films is not simply that one is good and the other poor to middling; Clément's latest film makes its own comment on what has happened to the cinema over the years. *Bataille du Rail* was hard, rough reconstruction, part of the post-war spurt towards documentary realism. Now Clément and his late producer, Paul Graetz, start with a best-seller and an all-star cast, and come up with a jumbo-size reconstruction of the liberation of Paris. All the same, it looks as though only about half the film as originally shot is on the screen. The complicated history of the fight for power at the end of the war between the French political parties and the manoeuvring of the Allied Powers turns up in snatched, disconnected episodes, facts hinted at but left uninterpreted.

The cutting edge is sharp and forward pushing, as though the American editor, Robert Lawrence, was urged to concentrate on the guts of each scene rather than any atmospheric shading. Dubbing of the English version is of course no help. But couldn't Clément have dodged such clumsy and time-worn vignettes as the scene with the quaint old lady who sips tea as French forces fire on Germans from her window, or the death of Anthony Perkins' philosophical G.I. as the tanks roll into the city? Once or twice towards the end, as the city comes to life with the approach of the Allies, the exaltation Clément must have striven for breaks through: heart-stopping moments like this are hard to kill. But soon another all-star face is popping up to do his turn and vanish forever—like Alain Delon as a Gaullist general, whose disappearance along with most of the other political figures in the latter half only adds to the confusion.

Care has been expended on making locations look twenty years old and battle-soiled; and on a surface level, in spite of an over-bright and inflexible lighting style, the reconstructed street fighting looks good. Unhappily, someone made the decision to introduce newsreels as well. Scratched, grainy, and stretched uncomfortably for the wide screen, they still give the game away, especially those marvellous shots of the streets slowly filling with cheering, crying people and the aerial views of liberated Paris *en fête*. Neither technically nor emotionally can the reality and the reconstruction be made to match, and a kind of uneasiness seeps through into the performances. Orson Welles as the Swedish consul reduces the part almost to a reverential whisper. Gert Fröbe as the German commandant von Choltitz (the real man died about the same time as the film's European release) gives one of those rock-like, suffering German performances which work because the actor's personality is strong enough to hold together his sections of this untidy film.

JOHN GILLETT

FILM CLIPS

ONCE I DISCOVERED from Milos Forman last year that he had in fact made another feature besides *Peter and Pavla* and *A Blonde in Love*, naturally nothing would satisfy me until I had seen it. Especially since it was unseeable in the West, and likely to remain so, owing to some slight problem about the rights of the music used in it. So finding myself in Prague on holiday recently, and faced with the quite embarrassing eagerness of the Czechs to show me films ("You can come 7.30 a.m., yes? I think is best—you will see four films before lunch . . ."), I did the obvious and asked them to fish *Konkurs* out of the archive for me.

It is, as you might expect from Forman, a very charming, acute, funny piece of filmmaking. A little too long for its material, perhaps, and with some crudities which he rapidly learned to eliminate. But for all that, very clearly a characteristic work of the director we know and love. For one thing, the first of its two episodes has such Forman totem figures in it as Vladimir Pucholt and Jan Ostrcil, the latter (the father from *Peter and Pavla*) playing here his proper role in life, that of a brass band master, and Pucholt an errant musician.

The opening sequence cross-cuts (a little self-consciously) between some amateur motor-cycle racing, the real interest of the younger men, and band rehearsals which they turn up to only very irregularly, so that they can play with the band when there is some money to come for their trouble. The two young men belong to rival bands, and we see them gradually working up to the competition which is the big event of their year. The bandmasters have sharply contrasted techniques: one young and intense; the other (Ostrcil) urging his bandsmen to renewed efforts with precisely the combination of bullying, disdain, autobiographical excursion, eager encouragement and splendid pomposity that we know from the later film.

Forman has obviously become fascinated by the man's character during the course of shooting. If the scenes in which the camera just observes him as he runs on are too long in relation to any rational assessment of the film's subject-matter, it is highly doubtful if any viewer could find it in his heart to wish them any shorter. Alas, for all the bandmasters' efforts, when the great day comes the young men are nowhere in sight, but off

at the races, while the president of the competition orates about the need to keep the precious heritage of Czech band music fresh for the younger generation. Both, consequently, are dismissed, but before long each is welcomed with open arms by the rival band.

The film's second episode, made first and blown up from 16mm., is more purely documentary. A Czech musical star holds auditions to find a girl singer for his show, and thousands and thousands of girls turn up, performing everything from rock 'n' roll to the classics. Forman frames this in a slight wisp of a story about one girl who lies her way out of work for the afternoon to compete and another, already semi-professional (played by Forman's wife) who intends to compete and then dries completely and decides not to. The beginning of the episode is an extended bar sequence suggestive of the dancehall scenes in the later films. But the major part is taken up with the actual auditions, brilliantly shot and edited (especially the scene in which we cut from face to face as each of five or six varied hopefuls sings a line of the same Bill Haley number) to balance the wickedly funny and the lightly pathetic.

For good measure, one of the people who turns up on the sidelines is immediately recognisable as Ladislav Jakim, 'Cerný Petr' himself. In other words, a real collector's item. I wonder just how long I shall have a monopoly in crowing over having seen it!

DID YOU SEE about the man who thinks films should call for aid on computers, to find out what they should be about and whom they should have in them for maximum audience response? He is not, perhaps needless to say, a film man directly, but Mr. A. H. Howe, the vice-president of the Bank of America in charge of the entertainment investment division in Los Angeles. As a good banker, he is disturbed by the present situation, in which the chances of a film having any sort of financial success are only fifty-fifty. He would be happier—and so of course would many other people—if things could be improved just a bit, so that there would be, say, a sixty-forty chance of success. And he thinks that reasonably enlightened use of computers might bring that about.

The first reaction, of course, was lofty disdain and a couple of howls of protest.

JAN OSTRCIL.



And yet, I'm not so sure. Of course you would never produce a *Citizen Kane* by feeding all the necessary information about film production in the last five years into a computer. To begin with, the computer would almost certainly say don't. If by some statistical freak it happened to say yes, this is just the moment for a truly revolutionary work of cinema, it would still, presumably, not be able to give you very helpful information about where the genius to make this film might be found. But then, how many *Citizen Kanes* get made in our present hit-or-miss order of things?

What is really worrying in the present order is that the ordinary film-makers, with no more lofty intention than to gauge public taste and satisfy it, at a reasonable profit to themselves, seem these days to have so little idea how to do it. Could a computer possibly do worse?

The only trouble one can foresee is that, unless the computers were very ingeniously programmed to take into account the rapid obsolescence of film fads, they would always be one jump behind the times. If you set out now on the basis of information about films and takings in the last couple of years to discover the most profitable thing to do, the answer would probably come up as "Another James Bond film with Sean Connery in the title role." Which (a) is just what most producers would decide off their own bat if they had half a chance; and (b) was no doubt right last year, but might be considerably less right next year. And would a computer have decided for making *The Sound of Music*, or would doubts about the filmic popularity of nuns have weighed against the virtues of Rodgers and Hammerstein? (Now, perhaps equally mistakenly, the presence of nuns in a film might count as a plus factor . . .)

The difficulty, in fact, is that the presuppositions of the people who programmed the computer, about what the selling elements in any given film might be, would be very likely to condition the sort of answers the computer gave. Still, at least a computer's view would relate directly to the facts; while the views of those who put together film packages nowadays often seem to relate to nothing on this earth except their own fantasies about what would be nicest for them.

NEW BRITISH FILMS suitable for a London Festival send-off tend to be conspicuous by their absence. But this time at least there was *The Private Right*, first feature, and indeed first completed film, by Michael Papas, a 27-year-old Greek graduate from the London School of Film Technique. Not only the director, who doubled as producer, writer, editor and art director, but practically the entire crew come from the School; and the result has a technical confidence which speaks well for its training and is exceptional enough in a first film from any source.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the film is the way it was set up. Papas, a movie addict from an early age, when he used to play marbles for snippets of film and sew them together to make up epics he could show on his home-made projectors, came to London to study and soon found himself involved, as well, in publishing a small magazine for London Greeks, which he sold around the cafés and shops of North London. His first piece of independent filmmaking was a short called *The Hands*, which he never quite completed, but which reached a showable stage and was included

in a programme given by a group of London-Greek actors at the Scala Theatre.

Although a rather conservative audience booed, a couple of businessmen liked it enough to suggest putting up some money for another short. Soon Papas had half-a-dozen people whom he had talked into putting up one or two hundred pounds apiece. And the film—based on an idea he had cherished for some time, about the running to earth and 'execution' of an Eoka traitor—grew in his mind from half-an-hour to forty minutes to an hour, and finally to full feature length.

He was still carrying his backers along on the wave of his own enthusiasm. Obviously, they reasoned, a feature of this sort, if they could get it shown in Greece and Cyprus, might even make some money. But for that it would need a Greek name in the cast; and the first actor who agreed to play the hounded terrorist couldn't resist making suggestions, based on every film he had ever seen, about how this one could be improved. The last straw came when he saw *Zorba the Greek*, and promptly wanted a Zorba dance inserted in the middle of the chase. With his exit went all except two of the backers, but the unit struggled on until shooting was nearly complete. (The time actually spent on shooting amounted altogether to about six weeks.) Then the major remaining backer, a dress manufacturer, discovered that business had taken a beating that year, and there was no more money free for the film.

Followed a tranced pause of several months, while various possible sources of money were explored. At last in desperation Papas got in touch with the N.F.F.C.,

showed them what he had in the can, and asked them for money to complete. They liked what they saw and agreed; they even agreed to a further loan to cover the cost of some reshooting. The extent of their final contribution to the budget is difficult to estimate: about 60 per cent of the actual cash put into the film, but obviously a much smaller proportion of the total if the investment of unit members in terms of deferred salaries, etc., is taken into account. Still, the investment was crucial, and from it has come the most striking and accomplished first film made in this country since *It Happened Here*.

Greek distribution is assured. A couple of distributors in this country are interested—more so perhaps since the film hit the headlines following some entirely misleading reports that it was violently anti-British. Meanwhile, Papas is already hard at work preparing his second film: a costume piece set in Crete around 1821, in colour and Panavision. The unit will be as far as possible the same as for *The Private Right*. "Why break up a good thing once you've got it?"

THE OTHER DAY in a record shop I picked up—don't ask me why—the sleeve of the original soundtrack recording from *The Trap*. This is presented on the front, fairly enough, as 'a George H. Brown Production,' but on the back, in the course of a fulsome sleeve-note, the writer goes on to say that "the direction was handled by George H. Brown" and expatiates on Mr. Brown's experience as a film-maker. Now experienced

as Mr. Brown may be, he did not as a matter of fact direct this film, but merely produced it. Not too difficult a distinction to grasp, one would have thought, but apparently beyond the writer of the sleeve-note; and presumably no one bothered to check or see that poor Sidney Hayers, who actually did direct *The Trap*, got even a passing mention.

The irritating thing about this sort of error is that it is so widespread. It seems that people not actually involved in films rarely if ever check their facts before writing or speaking about them, or even appreciate that details of this sort do make a difference. Not so long ago, for instance, one of those midday radio programmes announced that we were going to hear an interview with William Wyler, and then blandly and without further comment played through a tape of an interview with Billy Wilder. Nobody seemed to think it at all curious when the television showing of Wajda's trilogy was prefaced with confident assertions that it was the work of Andrzej Munk. And of late there have been several repetitions on radio and television of the old error about *High Noon*. Difficult to say for whom it is most irritating: Fred Zinnemann, who did direct it, to be denied the credit, or Carl Foreman, whose list of distinguished writing and production credits is as long as your arm, to be constantly introduced as the man who made *High Noon*—which of course is the one thing he wasn't. If music, or painting, or even the theatre were in question, howlers of this sort would be picked up at once. Poor, unregarded tenth muse, that apparently no one thinks it matters.

ARKADIN

BOOK REVIEWS

THE CELLULOID SACRIFICE, by Alexander Walker. Illustrated. (Michael Joseph, 35s.)

THE CHILD STARS, by Norman J. Zierold. Illustrated. (Macdonald, 25s.)

THERE WAS NEVER ANYTHING quite like movie stars before, except Gods and Goddesses; and even Gods and Goddesses lacked the special fascination of the stars, the piquant dual existence of the vulnerable, mortal, and often tortured human being which cowers within the splendid and immortal presence. The first part of Alexander Walker's *The Celluloid Sacrifice* is a series of essays in which he attempts to relate the screen work and the private personalities of nine great female stars—Theda Bara, Clara Bow, Pickford, Mae West, Dietrich, Garbo, Harlow, Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor—and to try to define their appeal through the interaction of the mortal and immortal parts of them. The method succeeds a great deal better than one might have expected, mainly because Mr. Walker's history is sound, his criticism generally unhampered by standard preconceptions and—most important—because he seems actually to have seen and enjoyed the films he is writing about. And he gives sense and cohesion to his underlying thesis, which is that,

despite all the apparent manipulation and pressure which may bear upon the star's career and the screen personality, there is a spontaneous creative process in the interaction of the public and private personality, the way that the screen image is shaped by the personal life; and the life affected by the image.

If he does not bring us much nearer to understanding such a mystery as the secret of Garbo's art (and he rightly insists that it is an art and not a beautiful illusion), he does shed quite a new light on Theda Bara, tracing her origins in Victorian romanticism and pre-Raphaelite mysticism; and on Clara Bow, whom he sees as a projection of the fantasy-life of the redoubtable Elinor Glyn. And his approach to Mary Pickford—arguing that the waif of the Belasco theatre should be revalued as a serious actress, though constantly frustrated by the screen image—is fresh and persuasive.

The second section of the book compares British and American systems of censorship, arguing approval of the current British system perhaps a shade more convincingly than optimism about the gradual clearing of the confused operations of America's moral guardians. The final section brings together an able analysis of the Doris Day/Rock Hudson school of 'sex comedy', and an essay on Mastroianni which is perhaps the least satisfactory in the book—partly because the thesis is flimsy (the inconsistency between the roles of sexual uncertainty which Mastroianni plays, and the Don Juan image of him that the audience is encouraged to maintain); partly because the essay as a whole is at odds with the rest of the book, with its emphasis on English-speaking cinema and on female sex images.

The junior league is no less fascinating and mysterious than its seniors. Norman J. Zierold's *The Child Stars* is frankly columnist's gossip; but irresistible despite areas of inaccuracy over names and dates, and such surprising references as "Lord Beaverbrook's *Daily Mirror*." The ascendancy of the child stars in the two decades after *The Kid* was a phenomenon never equalled at any time in the history of entertainment. For six years from 1936 to 1941 infants were the top box-office stars (first Shirley Temple for three years; then Mickey Rooney). The President of the United States, after an afternoon with Shirley (who was in the habit of giving audiences to such varied celebrities as Noël Coward, Thomas Mann and H. G. Wells) said: "When the spirit of the people is lower than at any time, during this depression, it is a splendid thing that for just 15 cents an American can go to a movie and look at the smiling face of a baby

and forget his troubles." Earlier, Jackie Coogan had been similarly accustomed to hobnobbing with foreign heads of state.

In the case of the child stars it is even more difficult to define exactly what quality gave them their appeal and eminence. Clearly conscious skill can be discounted in the case of such an artist as W. C. Fields' worrying co-star Baby Leroy, who retired at three; or Baby Sandy, whose big hits in the late Thirties were made at the age of one year. Elsewhere one must acknowledge that the natural histrionic gifts of children could be developed to an exceptional degree. Cooper and Coogan's quite conscious affectations of pathos are still to an extent effective. Shirley Temple, a troupier if ever there was one, explained her Method, which (maternal assistance apart) would be a model for any player: "Mummy reads the scenes to me, then I imagine the character and then I change myself into that character."

If the secret of the children's command over the audience remains elusive, one can at least measure the effect on the little stars of the weight of the world's adoration. Most of them seemed to stay remarkably unspoiled. Mr. Zierold does not instance a single nasty action on the part of any child star. They had their different defences. Shirley just romped through it all as a great silly game; Deanna Durbin loathed the entire business, howled when she was first thrust into it, resisted as far as she was able and got out as soon as she could. A few, of course, were less lucky: a Garland could inherit a lot of unhappiness from over-work, over-exploitation, and the sheer loneliness of stardom.

It was the parents whose characters tended to be corroded by their offsprings' success. Gertrude Temple was always a model parent. But at 23 poor Jackie Coogan had to bring a suit against his mother and stepfather, who had withheld all but a miserable pittance from his enormous earnings. By the time the case was over there was no longer any money to fight about. Even worse was the case of Freddie Bartholomew, the little English boy of humble origins and beautiful accent. His father and mother, grandfather and grandmother all pursued him and his formidable Aunt Cissie (*eminence grise* of his professional life) to America to claim their share of his affections and his success. All poor Freddie had to show at the end of his short, hard-worked screen career was the memory of twenty-seven costly lawsuits. Life, evidently, could be very hard for these children who—not from their own choice—traded their childhood for a little part in immortality.

DAVID ROBINSON

MONTAGE NO. 5/6: SPECIAL ISSUE ON SATYAJIT RAY. Edited by Uma Krupanidhi. Illustrated. Anandam Film Society, Bombay. (Rs. 5 or 5s.)

THIS INDIAN PUBLICATION, written in English, is a brave and successful effort to anatomise a director. A score of Satyajit Ray's friends and colleagues and a few non-Indian writers contribute; his films are followed from the initial ideas, through shooting, to the critical reactions afterwards. The capsule reviews of all 14 films which comprise one section soon dispel any fear that the tone might be one of unrestrained idolatry. Opinions (from Indian literary figures, students, film society personnel, as well as professional critics) suggest a greater liking for the period films than the modern stories, a point of view taken up by Chidananda Das Gupta elsewhere in this issue. The old debate about Ray's fidelity or otherwise to his authors—notably Tagore—is fully aired; and here there are signs that an over-literary approach to cinema is not only a Western failing.

The script of *Nayak* is printed in full: as a note points out, it is likely to be the most difficult of Ray's films for non-Bengalis to follow. Although the film's weaknesses are allowed by some contributors, much of it in fact reads rather well, and might encourage publishers to bring out a volume of Ray scripts—newly translated, one would hope, and not taken from the subtitles. As this is a study in depth, there is a pre-film article on Ray the commercial artist, complete with his illustrations for book jackets and the children's edition of *Pather Panchali*. These witty drawings of moustachioed men and slapstick situations suggest that Ray might well make a truly grotesque film one day, perhaps owing something to the Russian parodies of Kozintsev and Kuleshov.

Apart from Ray's own words (mainly from earlier magazine articles), we have interviews with his permanent *équipe* and some favourite actors. Soumitra Chatterjee defends Ray's heroes against charges of weakness. Uma Das Gupta (the Durga of *Pather Panchali*) tells how she was persuaded to take the role despite her parents' objections, and has never played in a film since. Interwoven through these interviews is much useful description of working methods, including those famous whispered instructions to child actors. Some contributors are critical of Ray's apparent eagerness to control all aspects of his films, including the music. Is he just a

gifted musical amateur, someone asks? (Maybe, but surely the scores for *Charulata* and *Shakespeare Wallah* have a fresh, uncluttered sound not usually encountered in Indian films?) It is nice to see pictures of people like Bansi Chandragupta, the art director, and Subrata Mitra (seen hanging on to the *Jalsaghar* camera crane), who adds a somewhat horrific sidelight on the projection hazards of Indian cinemas.

Apart from some rather murky stills and a few misprints of proper names, this is a handsomely produced volume, with imaginatively varied page make-up and type faces and engaging little drawings, mostly of or by Ray. It looks as though it has been put together with love.

JOHN GILLETT

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE ACADEMY AWARDS: A PICTORIAL HISTORY. By Paul Michael. (Allen and Unwin, 45s.)

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS IN PHOTOGRAPHY. By G. Russell. (Focal Press, 90s.)

EROS IN THE CINEMA. By Raymond Durnat. (Calder and Boyars, 30s.)

THE FILM-MAKER'S ART. By Haig P. Manoogian. (Basic Books, 50s.)

FUN IN A CHINESE LAUNDRY. By Josef von Sternberg. (Secker and Warburg, 42s.)

INTERNATIONAL FILM GUIDE 1967. Edited by Peter Cowie. (Tantivy Press, 10s. 6d.)

MODERATO CANTABILE. By Marguerite Duras, translated by Richard Seaver. (Calder and Boyars, 21s.)

SWEDISH CINEMA. By Peter Cowie. (Zwemmers, 12s. 6d.)

LONDON FESTIVAL

continued from page 13

whip past them through the snow, headlamps glaring.

After a trip in her tram, they go to a nightclub, huge, white, deserted, the absurd waiters standing around, the bandmen playing with plates and cutlery. Again the jester's sense of the absurd: the boy asks the head-waiter to change the tablecloth. He does so by substituting an entire new table. Suddenly the place is packed with World War II veterans, dancing and singing, wearing paper hats made out of women's magazines. "One in six of them fell in the war. They sing about it," says the boy. "What do we sing about?" Outside the boy spars like a matador with a car wrapped in plastic sheeting; the driver yells out "One day you'll die and there'll be no resurrection."

The couple climb to the roof of the students' hostel. Nothing happens between them. She slaps his face. He throws himself off the roof, tumbling down a steep snow-slope, landing among a flock of geese. He collapses in a hot-house among flowers, stacks away his sword. She goes back to the tram depot, place of hallucinating light and darkness, oil running, water flushing the sides of trams, signs being painted, and figures crawling over a huge plastic tent, like airborne frogmen. She visits the depot doctor, a man in his late thirties, wiser than her and sadder. He gives her a medical certificate, tells her an anecdote: "A girl fell under a tramcar. She had a red ribbon tied round her knees because she was learning to walk smart. And when the tram came she forgot she couldn't run fast."

The girl takes out her tram, desperately unhappy, a frightening trip at sunset. A blind passenger asks her help, blinded in the war he says. She leads him to a wall he seeks, then accuses him of shamming; and of course he's not blind. Back to the tram, back to the student-house, the boy's not there, she's ridiculed by the students, "There's some romantic stuff left in our cynical generation. What was he like, this boy?" "He went around with a sabre," she replies, and rushes back to the tram in tears. She drives off, surely heading for an accident, and he rears up before her, clinging to the front bumpers, a precarious coming-together at last, and it's over.

This headlong account can only begin to give some idea of the cool frenzy with which Skolimowski taps the deepest veins of Polish reality now, the reflexes of nostalgia, yearning for the new, the pulse of restless dissatisfaction, and the sheer wonder at being alive at all. It's a visionary film, the film of a jester with a vision that is disenchanted but not deceived into anything facile.

CORRESPONDENCE

Goodbye to All What?

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—Almost simultaneous with Philip French's article, "Goodbye to All What?" in the Autumn 1966 issue of your magazine came Dwight Macdonald's "valedictory" movie column after more than six years with *Esquire*. Some of Macdonald's reasons: "... the postwar renaissance of cinema, which reached its height roughly between 1958 and 1964, has in the past two years gone into a decline that shows no sign of being reversed ... there are even more movies coming along now with pretensions to art that on inspection turn out to be meretricious than there used to be in those Good Old Days all of three or four years ago. The spate of 'entertainment' that rarely entertains is as copious as ever ... For criticism to be useful there must be some reasonable balance between new, original creation and the old stuff, the *déjà vu*, the kitsch ... When kitsch becomes not predominant—it has been for two hundred years—but monopolistic, then one finds that as the years go by one has already reviewed, under another title, almost every new film one sees. While a good movie is *sui generis*, so that one has to respond to it specifically and individually, bad movies fall into categories and, once one has dealt with the category, it is tedious to keep repeating the demonstration." And so on.

One of the benefits of having done with film criticism that Mr. Macdonald cites is that he now won't have to see any more movies by, among others, "M. Godard, or several other directors whose work I doubt, from experience, will give me pleasure."

This serves to point up the most severe criticism that can be laid against American film criticism at its best—that is, as practised by such excellent writers as Pauline Kael in *The New Republic*, John Simon in *The New Leader*, Manny Farber in, of all unlikely publications, *Cavalier*, and, heretofore, Macdonald and Stanley Kauffmann.

The best kind of criticism, on films or on anything else, it seems to me, has to take personal opinion into account. But it must also recognise that opinion for what it is and, ultimately, rise above it. For some reason, such a thing is as yet unpractised in this country.

Would that a little of the SIGHT AND SOUND light would shine over here and bring us out of our critical slump. Dwight Macdonald's personal opinion of what movies ought to be clashed violently with what the films are becoming in actuality, so he threw up his hands in dismay and quit. Unless our other leading critics learn to rise above their own petty personal conceptions and see both the cinema and themselves for their corporate actualities, we can look forward to a lot of other people following Macdonald and Tynan's lead. And then where will we be?

The Suffolk Sun,
Long Island, New York.

Yours faithfully,
DAN BATES

LIBRAIRIE DU SPECTACLE

contacts

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Censorship in New Zealand

SIR,—I read with great interest the discussion of censorship by Neville Hunnings (SIGHT AND SOUND, Summer 1966), and feel rather cheered at the picture he paints of the growing triumphs of liberalism in the arts.

However, I would like to make a few points about film censorship in New Zealand, since Mr. Hunnings discusses literary censorship in this country with such approval. Film censorship in New Zealand must be in the running for being the most illiberal in the world; I feel that one's pride in the Indecent Publications Tribunal should be tempered by a realisation of this fact.

Last year the New Zealand Censor and Registrar of Films (Mr. D. C. MacIntosh) banned Buñuel's *Diary of a Chambermaid*, Godard's *Une Femme Mariée*, and even attempted to ban *The Knack*. (This decision was rescinded by the Appeal Board.) He has recently cut such films as *La Dolce Vita*, *La Notte*, *Modesty Blaise*, *Lord of the Flies*, demanded that *Repulsion* be cut before it be admitted, and so instilled in distributors an awareness of his arbitrary decisions that Pasolini's *Accattone* was cut before it was submitted to the censor.

It has been found that it is common practice for the censor to restrict films to a certain age group, then cut them as well (e.g.: *Dolce Vita*, *La Notte*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Repulsion*), surely a completely indefensible procedure.

In recent public discussions of censorship Mr. MacIntosh has made it clear that he never considers films as works of art, although an increasing number of films are being shown here which are indisputably in this category.

There is an Appeal Board, consisting of three elderly citizens (average age 65), to whom the distributor can appeal if the censor wants to ban or cut a film, but they have recently proved to be if anything even less liberal than the censor (they banned *The Collector*, which the censor wanted to cut), so will hardly aid in the liberalisation or abolition of censorship.

Nelson, New Zealand.

Yours faithfully,
PETER BOYES

SIR,—"The Silence of Fanny Hill" by Neville Hunnings, makes several complimentary remarks about New Zealand's censorship laws. He states in his article "Both the Quebec film censorship board and the New Zealand Indecent Publications Tribunal work from the assumption that books and films are to be taken seriously." The members of the New Zealand Indecent Publications Tribunal may assume films should be taken seriously, themselves personally, but officially the Tribunal has nothing whatsoever to do with film censorship, unfortunately.

A film which is passed with excisions by the censor, or a film banned by the censor, can be referred to an appeal board consisting of three elderly citizens who have no special qualifications for judging films. The board is capable of very inconsistent decisions. *The Knack* was banned by the censor, the distributor referred the film to the appeals board which passed the film without cuts, after an argument on the effect of removing the rape scene. Conversely the censor passed, subject to excisions, Wyler's *The Collector*, but the appeals board banned the film entirely. Our problem lies not so much in the system we use but in its administrators.

Christchurch, New Zealand.

Yours faithfully,
WARREN SELLERS

Best Remaining Seats

SIR,—Reading the admirable American dedication to the movie palaces—Ben Hall's *Best Remaining Seats*—and recently revisiting the Granada at Tooting in London, has impelled me to suggest a Movie Theatre Society for Britain.

Aims would be to study, appreciate, and try to press for survival of the few remaining Super Cinemas of outstanding merit (e.g. Granada at Tooting, the Astorias at Brixton and Finsbury Park, the Gaumont at Bournemouth, etc.), and also those surviving picture theatres of the 1920s—the smaller, equally nostalgic buildings which once housed flickerings of Valentino and Vilma Banky and (in a few cases) still serve as modernised compact cinemas.

Would all interested please write to me? As a Society we might eventually (and in time) have some influence on managements, or at least instil a sense of pride in what they so apathetically possess. After all, the girl in the pay box at Tooting did come to life at my reference to the architecture: "... I think this is the most beautiful cinema I have ever seen ..."

35 Rosslyn Hill,
Hampstead,
London, N.W.3.

Yours faithfully,
ERIC A. GEORGE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

UNITED ARTISTS for *A Thousand Clowns*.
 PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *Seconds*, photograph of Louise Brooks.
 COLUMBIA PICTURES for *The Harder They Fall*.
 WARNER-PATHE for *The Witches, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*
 WARNER BROS. for *Casablanca, The Oklahoma Kid, Across the Pacific, The Treasure of Sierra Madre, The Petrified Forest*.
 M-G-M for *Seven Women*.
 DOUGLAS & LEWIS PRODUCTIONS/M-G-M for *Grand Prix*.
 APPIA/M-G-M for *Far from the Madding Crowd*.
 GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Au Hasard, Balthazar, Masculin Feminin*.
 RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Fahrenheit 451*.
 CONTEMPORARY FILMS for *Jalsaghar, Peter and Pavla*.
 CONNOISSEUR FILMS for *Alphaville*.
 AMANDA FILMS for *Charulata*.
 ANOUCHKA FILMS for *Deux ou Trois Choses que Je sais d'Elle*.
 COMO FILM for *Trans-Europ-Express*.
 PARC FILM/MADELEINE FILMS for *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort*.
 NOUVELLES EDITIONS DE FILM-ARTISTES ASS./C. C. MONTORO SPA for *Le Voleur*.
 GEORGES DE BEAUREGARD for *Made in U.S.A.*
 R. D. BANSAL PRODUCTIONS for *Mahanagar*.
 RAJSHRI PRODUCTIONS for *Kapurush*.
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SOLE AGENTS for U.S.A.: Eastern News Distributors, 155 West 15th Street New York 10011.

PRINTED BY Brown Knight & Truscott Ltd., London, England.

BLOCKS by W. F. Sedgwick, Ltd., London.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES (4 issues), 20s. including postage.

U.S.A.: \$4. Price per copy in United States, \$1.

PUBLICATION DATES: 1st January, 1st April, 1st July, and 1st October. Overseas Editions: 12th of these months.

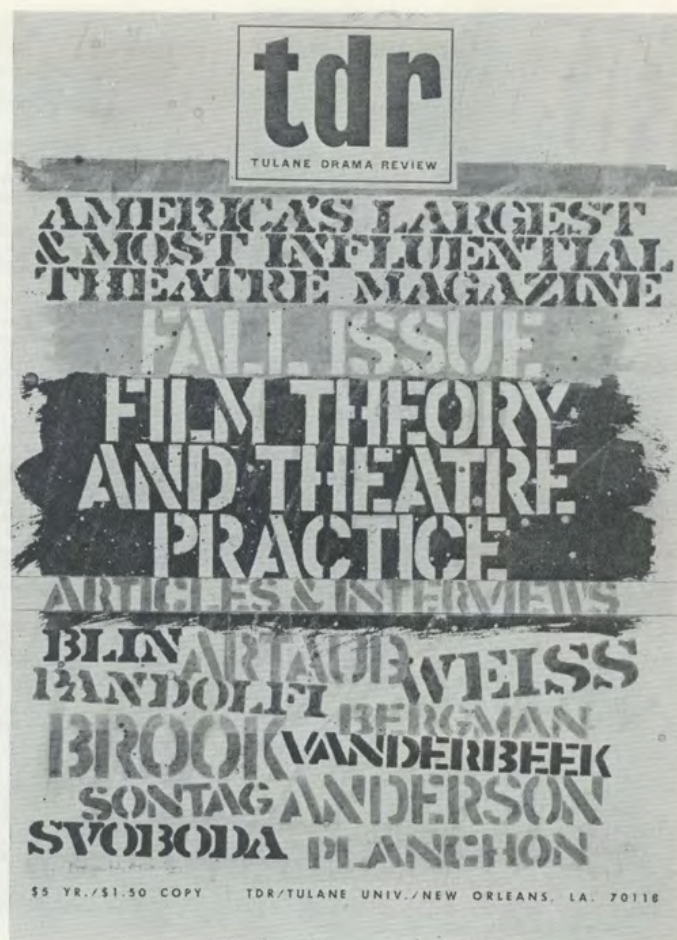
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (Act of October 23, 1962; Section 4369, Title 39, United States Code).

1. Date of Filing: October 1, 1966.
2. Title of Publication: SIGHT AND SOUND.
3. Frequency of Issue: Quarterly.
4. Location of Known Office of Publication: 81 Dean Street, London, W.1.
5. Location of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publishers: 81 Dean Street, London, W.1.
6. Names and Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor:
 Publisher: British Film Institute, 81 Dean Street, London, W.1; Editor and Managing Editor: Penelope Houston, 81 Dean Street, London, W.1.
7. Owner: British Film Institute, 81 Dean Street, London, W.1; Stanley Reed (Director), 81 Dean Street, London, W.1; Vernon Saunders (Secretary), 81 Dean Street, London, W.1.
8. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and other Security Holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or other Securities: None.
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	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Single Issue Nearest To Filing Date
A. Total No. Copies Printed (Net press run) 102,100	25,525	26,300
B. Paid Circulation:		
1. Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales ...	8,830	8,900
2. Mail Subscriptions ...	16,300	16,850
C. Total Paid Circulation ...	25,130	25,750
D. Free Distribution by mail, carrier or other means ...	220	220
E. Total Distribution ...	25,350	25,970
F. Office Use, Left-over, Unaccounted, Spoiled after printing ...	175	330
G. Total ...	25,525	26,300

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FILM GUIDE

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars.

******ACTOR'S REVENGE, AN** (*Contemporary*) Bizarre, brilliant Ichikawa film about a female impersonator forced by convention to take part in a grisly revenge plot. In style, something like a witty coalition between Kabuki and Jacobean tragedy. (Kazuo Hasegawa, Ayako Wakao, Raizo Ichikawa, Daiei Colour, Daieiscope.)

AND NOW MIGUEL (*Rank*) Unpretentious and quite likeable children's film about a young Mexican boy's attempts to convince his father that he is old enough to work with him as a shepherd. (Pat Cardi, Guy Stockwell, Clu Gulager; director, James B. Clarke. Technicolor.)

******AU HASARD, BALTHAZAR** (*Gala*) Bresson's extraordinary film about the life and times of a donkey, and the people who own, love, chastise and exploit him and each other. Full of ellipses and short-circuits, but out of interaction comes a grave lucidity of statement. A masterpiece. (Anne Wiazemsky, François Lafarge.) *Reviewed.*

BATMAN (*Fox*) Openly corny send-up of the lovable antics of a lovable pair of crime-fighters. Sometimes witty in its awfulness, but strictly for camp followers. (Adam West, Burt Ward, Burgess Meredith; director, Leslie H. Martinson. DeLuxe Color, Widescreen.)

***BIBLE, THE** (*Fox*) After four years of fairly constant advertising at last it's arrived and pretty boring it turns out to be. Huston clearly enjoyed doing Noah's Ark, but the Creation is disappointingly unspectacular and the actors fight a losing battle against the script's deliberate archaisms. (Richard Harris, George C. Scott, Peter O'Toole. Technicolor, 70 mm.)

BOURSE ET LA VIE, LA (*Gala*) Fernandel and Heinz Rühmann in a wild cross-country chase as the bumbling guardians of a hefty payroll. Jean-Pierre Mocky directs with a singular lack of invention and unfailing bad taste. (Jean Poiret, Darry Cowl. Eastman Colour.)

BRIDES OF FU MANCHU, THE (*Warner-Pathé*) Scotland Yard versus Fu Manchu in another version of the Sax Rohmer story. Christopher Lee makes a somewhat less than sinister Chinese, and the Yellow Peril side of things is disappointing, but there's some engaging period detail. (Douglas Wilmer, Marie Versini, Tsai Chin; director, Don Sharp. Eastman Colour.)

DANGER GROWS WILD (*BLC/British Lion*) Slow, silly and optimistically star-studded thriller about the opium trade, made by the United Nations for moral and charitable purposes. The colour print achieves rare standards of ugliness. (E. G. Marshall, Trevor Howard, Yul Brynner, Rita Hayworth, Angie Dickinson; director, Terence Young. Eastman Colour.)

***DIMANCHE DE LA VIE, LE** (*Gala*) First feature by Jean Herman, a gently satirical re-creation of a pre-war Paris *quartier*. Raymond Queneau wrote the script, and a battery of camera tricks echoes *Zazie*; but Herman is no Louis Malle. (Danielle Darrieux, Jean-Pierre Moulin, Françoise Arnoul.)

*****EAVESDROPPER, THE** (*Gala*) Torre Nilsson's fascinating study of the obsessive world of a young South American Fascist. Much less stylistically self-indulgent than some of his previous films and all the better for it. (Stathis Giallellis, Janet Margolin.)

*****FAHRENHEIT 451** (*Rank*) Truffaut's wholly endearing version of Ray Bradbury's futuristic novel about a world where firemen burn books. Fascinating marriage of elegiac and horrific, and every inch a Truffaut film. (Julie Christie, Oskar Werner, Cyril Cusack. Technicolor.) *Reviewed.*

***FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM, A** (*United Artists*) A slight case of collision between Dick Lester's swinging style and the stagebound musical about the lighter side of ancient Rome. Result distinctly on the frantic side, though some of the marginal jokes are fun. (Zero Mostel, Phil Silvers, Buster Keaton. DeLuxe Color.) *Reviewed.*

GAMBIT (*Rank*) "Perfect crime" story about a Cockney thief who carries out an incredible robbery in colourful Arabian country. Sparkles when Shirley MacLaine is around, but fizzles out somewhat with Michael Caine. (Herbert Lom, Roger C. Carmel; director, Ronald Neame. Technicolor.)

***HAWAII** (*United Artists*) A thoroughly respectable epic, adapted from a small section of Michener's vast tome, taking a literate but superficial look at the disastrous effect of 19th century Calvinist bigotry on Polynesia. But there is the usual pressure to be spectacular, and the second half drags. (Max von Sydow, Julie Andrews, Richard Harris; director, George Roy Hill. DeLuxe Color, Panavision.)

IS PARIS BURNING? (*Paramount*) René Clément comes a cropper with this lavish yet hollow reconstruction of the liberation of Paris. Politically confused and stuffed with guest stars to little effect; only really comes to life with the actual newsreels. (Gert Fröbe, Orson Welles, Leslie Caron, Anthony Perkins. Panavision.) *Reviewed.*

*****MAN WHO HAD HIS HAIR CUT SHORT, THE** (*Contemporary*) Remarkable Flemish film, a first feature by André Delvaux. Ostensibly a thriller about a teacher's love for one of his pupils; more particularly, a brooding analysis of his intimations of mortality as he becomes obsessed by the horror of her beauty. (Senne Rouffaer, Beata Tyszkiewicz, Hector Camerlynck.)

******MASCULIN FEMININ** (*Gala*) Godard's eleventh, and as expectedly unexpected as the other ten. "15 Precise Facts" about life today: tenderness and tragedy, interviews and insolence, youth and yé-yé. (Jean-Pierre Léaud, Chantal Goya, Marlène Jobert.) *Reviewed.*

***MICKEY ONE** (*BLC/Columbia*) Kafka, American style, as a young man (Warren Beatty), haunted by the idea of some unnameable sin, wanders through the contemporary anguished scene in search of something or other. Gamely fighting through a forest of symbols, Arthur Penn's direction is occasionally riveting. (Alexandra Stewart, Hurd Hatfield, Franchot Tone.)

NIGHT GAMES (*Gala*) Mai Zetterling's film about fun and games in a country chateau as observed by a precocious small boy. Much less daring than it thinks it is; good to look at, but solemn and stodgy. (Ingrid Thulin, Kevé Hjelm, Naima Wifstrand.)

NOT WITH MY WIFE, YOU DON'T! (*Warner-Pathé*) Routine comedy with Tony Curtis and George C. Scott as Air Force pilots endlessly (and laboriously) double-crossing each other in an attempt to win Virna Lisi. (Carroll O'Connor; director, Norman Panama. Technicolor.)

***ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.** (*Warner-Pathé*) Hammer's hundredth film, and a hugely enjoyable spectacle it turns out to be. Expertly constructed monsters look very much the real thing, and leave the cavemen far behind. (John Richardson, Raquel Welch, Percy Herbert; director, Don Chaffey. Technicolor.) *Reviewed.*

***ONIBABA** (*Orb*) Like most Japanese films of horror, this one lays on the grisly thrills rather too thickly; but period setting and locations (grassy marshes and seashore) used to splendid visual effect. Needs the sense of legend and poetry that Mizoguchi might have given it. (Nobuko Otowa, Jitsuko Yoshimura; director, Kaneto Shindo. Tohoscope.)

PRESS FOR TIME (*Rank*) Unchanging Norman Wisdom comedy, with the big-hearted little man as suffragette, Prime Minister and incompetent journalist. Much slapstick, little imagination. (Derek Bond, Angela Browne, Derek Francis; director, Robert Asher. Eastman Colour.)

PROMISE HER ANYTHING (*Paramount*) Sometimes agreeable but generally dispiriting comedy, with Warren Beatty as a Greenwich Village layabout who makes mail order stag movies—with little success until Leslie Caron's baby gives him some ideas for a kinky variation. The baby looks set for stardom. (Bob Cummings, Lionel Stander, Keenan Wynn; director, Arthur Hiller. Technicolor.)

***QUILLER MEMORANDUM, THE** (*Rank*) Elementary secret agent story, about neo-Nazis on the rampage in Berlin, Pinterised into a not unengaging hybrid between Boys Own Paper and Le Carré. Striking locations; nice performance by master-spy Alec Guinness; but the direction creaks with applied significance. (George Segal, Max von Sydow, Senta Berger; director, Michael Anderson. Technicolor, Panavision.) *Reviewed.*

RAGE (*BLC/Columbia*) First effort in a new U.S./Mexican production deal: a wild and woolly melodrama in which a doctor with a death wish fights off incipient rabies while performing an emergency Caesarean operation in the wilds. (Glenn Ford, Stella Stevens; director, Gilberto Gazcón. Technicolor.)

*****ROUND-UP, THE** (*Contemporary*) A Hungarian prison camp in the 1860s, with the guards trying to sniff out members of a famous outlaw band. Forget any dampening preconceptions about East European prison films: this one is bold, elliptical, astonishingly fine to look at, and worked out like championship chess. (János Görbe, Tibor Molnár, András Kozák; director, Miklós Jancsó. Agascope.)

*****SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT** (*Contemporary*) Wojciech Has' shaggy dog story (or rather, collection of stories) of the 18th century, involving picaresque adventures among Inquisitors, knights, monks, demons and lovelorn ladies. Over-long but often engaging, and with some fine exotic locations. (Zbigniew Cybulski, Iga Cembrzynska, Joanna Jedryka. Dyaliscope.)

*****SECONDS** (*Paramount*) Another of Frankheimer's engaging fantasy thrillers, about an organisation devoted to the rejuvenation of tired businessmen. Riveting opening, sagging middle, ending recouped. (Rock Hudson, Salome Jens, John Randolph, Jeff Corey.) *Reviewed.*

******SEVEN WOMEN** (*M-G-M*) Or the film Ford made for his most understanding admirers. Missionaries in 30s China, a brutish Mongol warlord, and a worldly doctor who sacrifices herself. Loving performances from all the ladies, and Ford makes it entirely his own. (Anne Bancroft, Margaret Leighton, Flora Robson, Eddie Albert. Metrocolor, Panavision.) *Reviewed.*

***TARZAN AND THE VALLEY OF GOLD** (*Warner-Pathé*) Tarzan as James Bond: he arrives by jet, superbly tailored, for his battle against David Opatoshu's gold-crazed villain. The old tree-slinger soon sheds his clothes but not his sophistication in this enjoyable, Gold-fingerish adventure. (Mike Henry, Nancy Kovack; director, Robert Day. Eastman Colour, Panavision.)

THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO (*United Artists*) Children's television series brought to the big screen in Supermarionation. Puppets a little wooden, but elaborate working models for children of all ages. (Director, David Lane. Technicolor.)

*****TO DIE IN MADRID** (*Contemporary*) Frédéric Rossif's careful, sympathetic compilation on the Spanish Civil War, mostly avoiding the more familiar material. Commentary inclined to literary utterance, but well delivered by John Gielgud, Irene Worth, William Hutt.

VENETIAN AFFAIR, THE (*M-G-M*) Another reluctant secret agent involved in ultra-complex politico-spy plot. Attractive Venice locations compensate for dullish story and acting. (Robert Vaughn, Elke Sommer, Boris Karloff; director, Jerry Thorpe. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

***WITCHES, THE** (*Warner-Pathé*) Joan Fontaine, headmistress of English village school, tangles with local witch-cult headed by a splendid Kay Walsh. Intelligently scripted. (Nigel Kneale), well acted, but only tolerably directed. (Alec McCowen, Ann Bell, Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies; director, Cyril Frankel. Technicolor.) *Reviewed.*

*****WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?** (*Warner-Pathé*) Surprisingly successful screen version of Edward Albee's storming play about married life on the campus. Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton manage the marathon screaming match with relish. (George Segal, Sandy Dennis; director, Mike Nichols.)

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